Until Death do us Part

1

Story: Hiroshi Takashige
Art: DOUBLE-S

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Until
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do us
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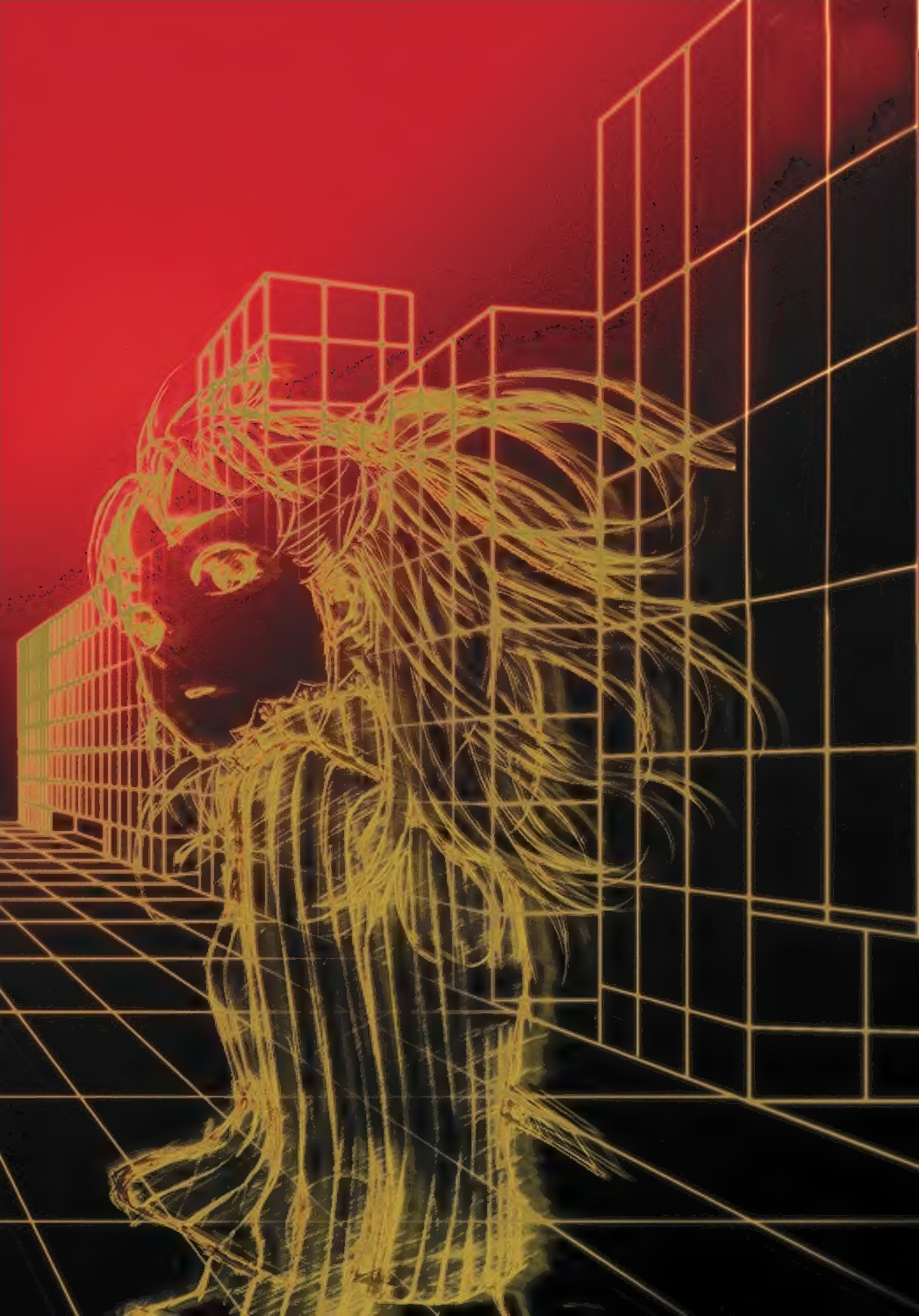

Until Death do us Part

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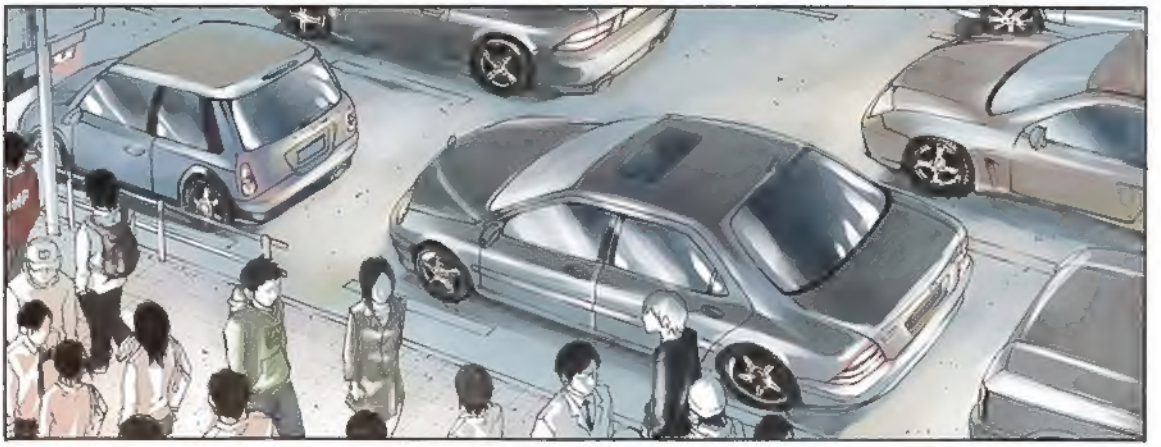
Story: Hiroshi Takashige

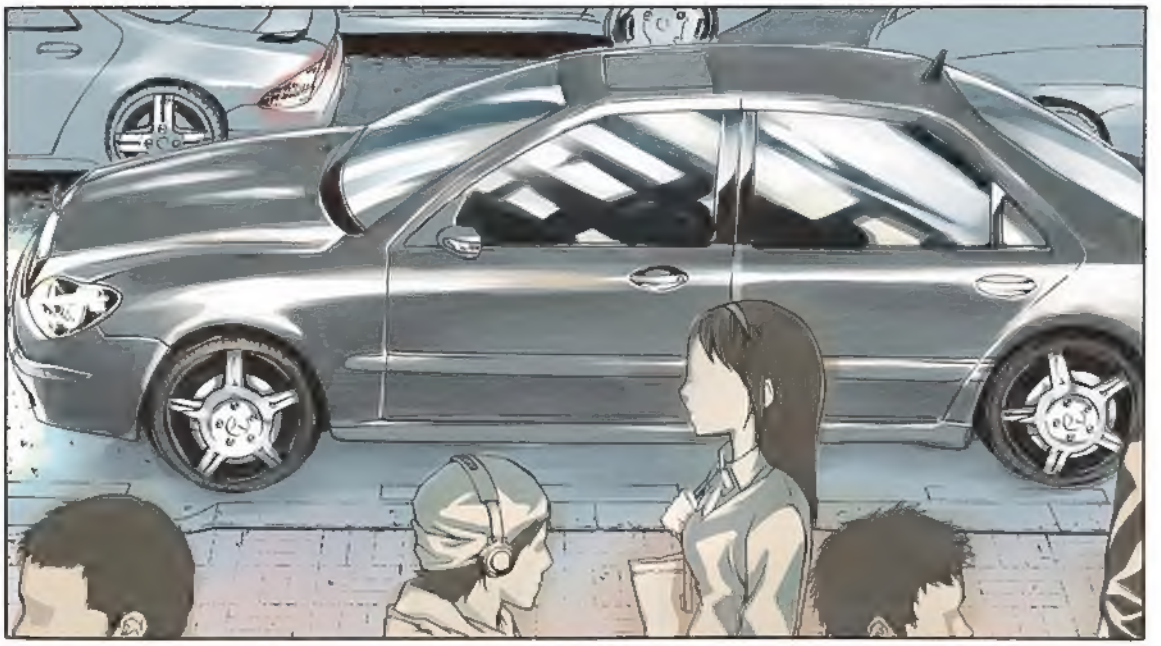
Art: DOUBLE-S

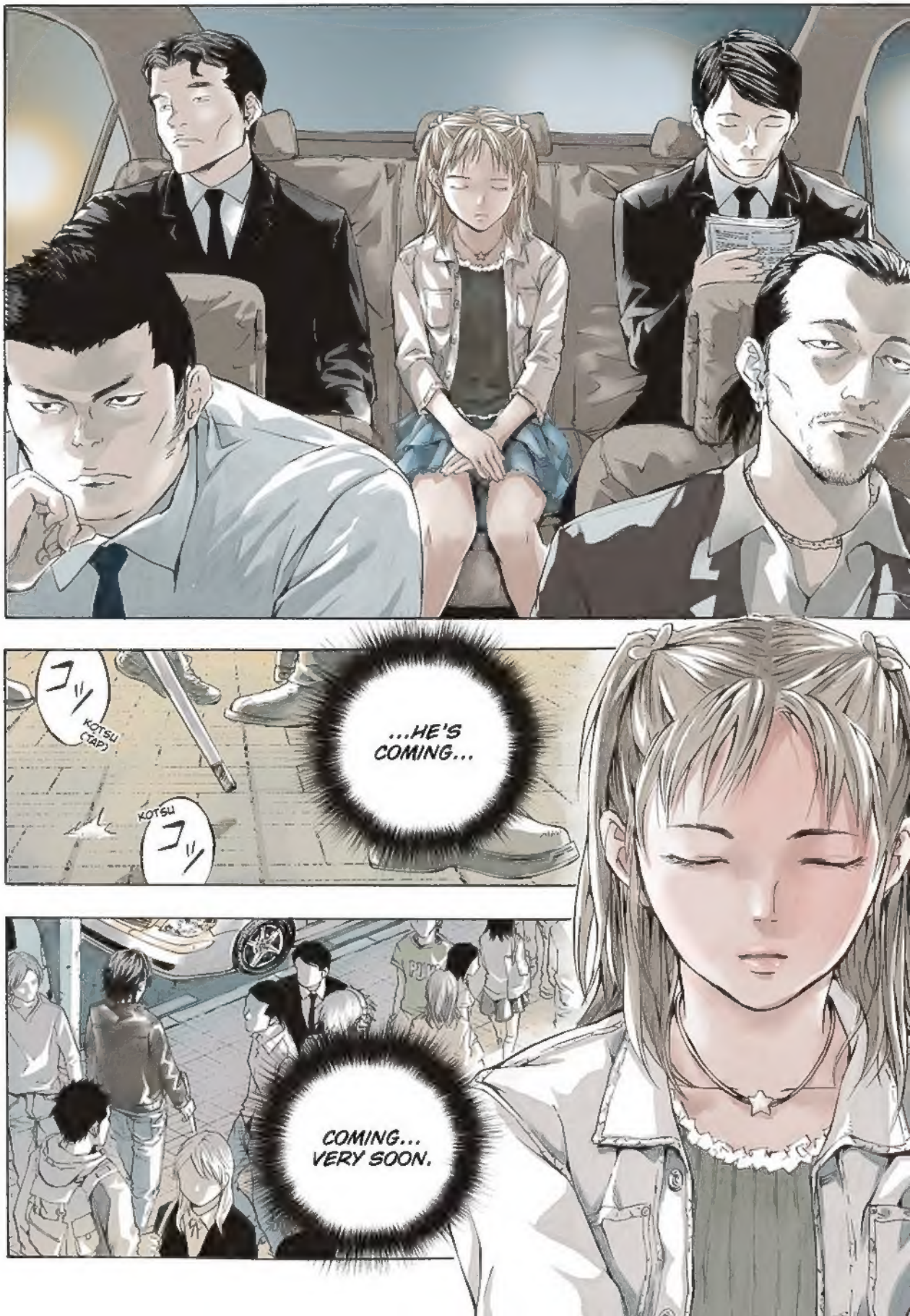
CONTENTS

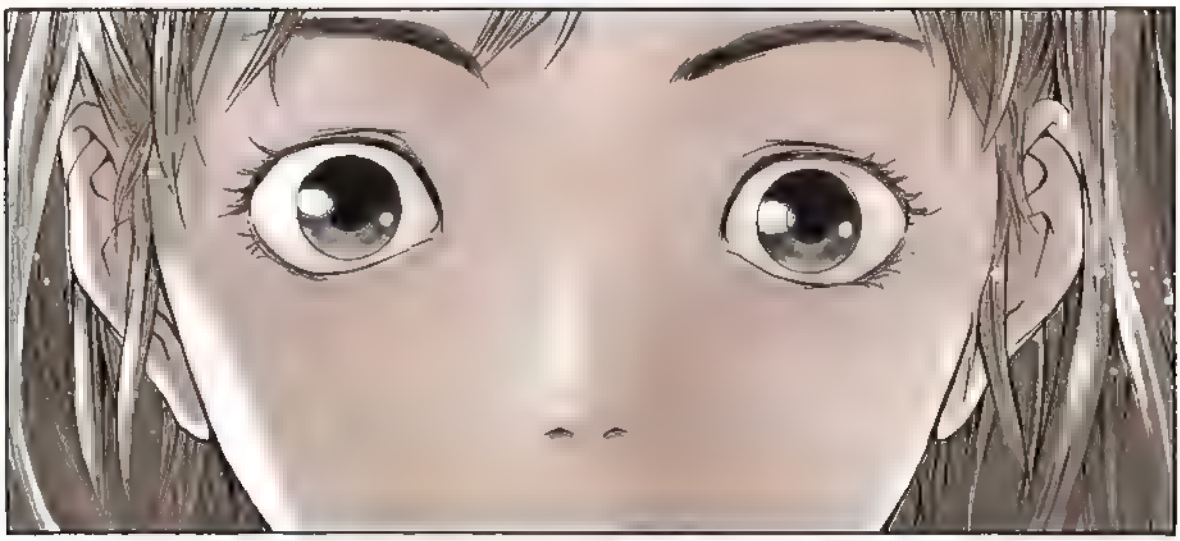
CHAPTER 1------007
CHAPTER 2------045
CHAPTER 3------071
CHAPTER 4------099
CHAPTER 5------123
CHAPTER 6------149
CHAPTER 7------175
CHAPTER 8------199
CHAPTER 9------231
CHAPTER 10-----259
CHAPTER 11-----285
CHAPTER 12-----313
CHAPTER 13-----341
CHAPTER 14-----369
CHAPTER 15-----395
CHAPTER 16-----421

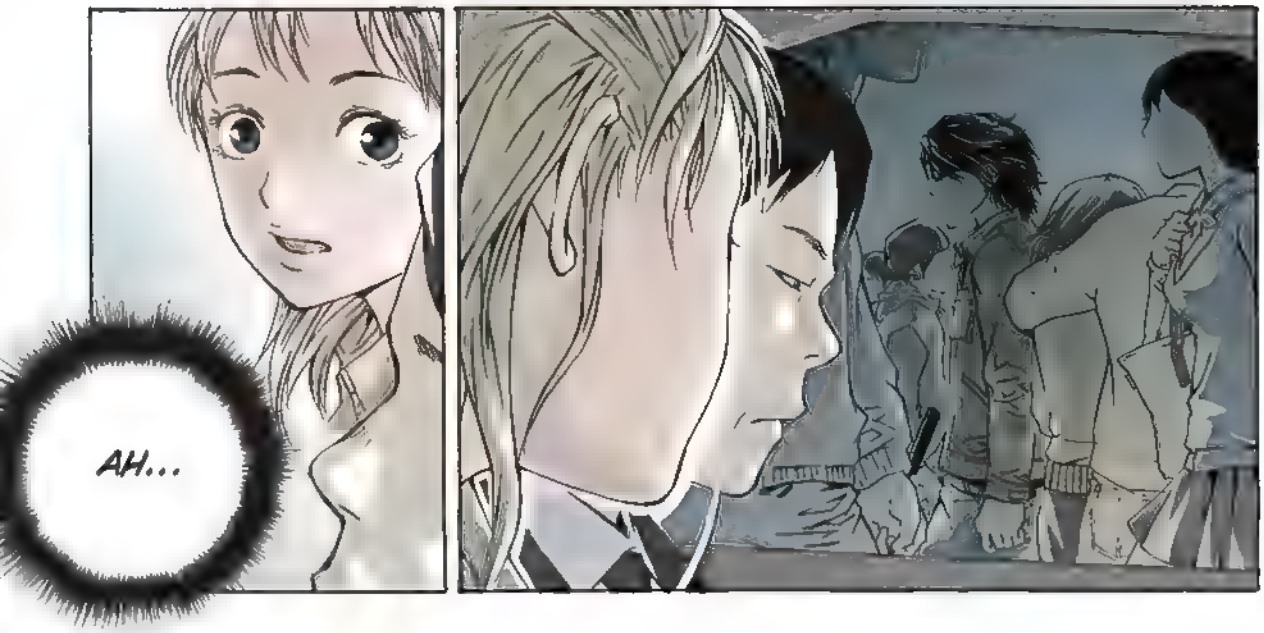
db
Dress Back

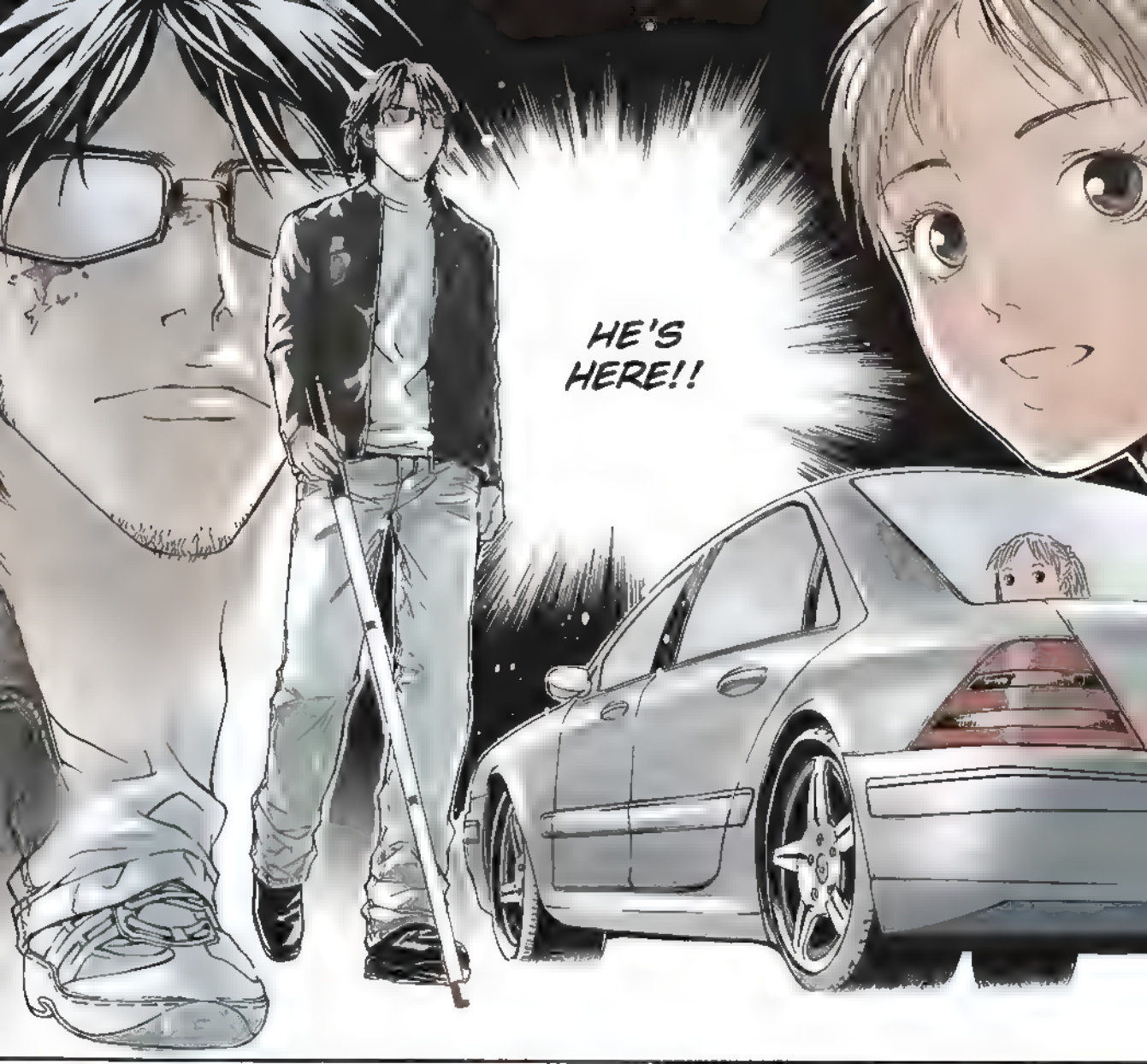


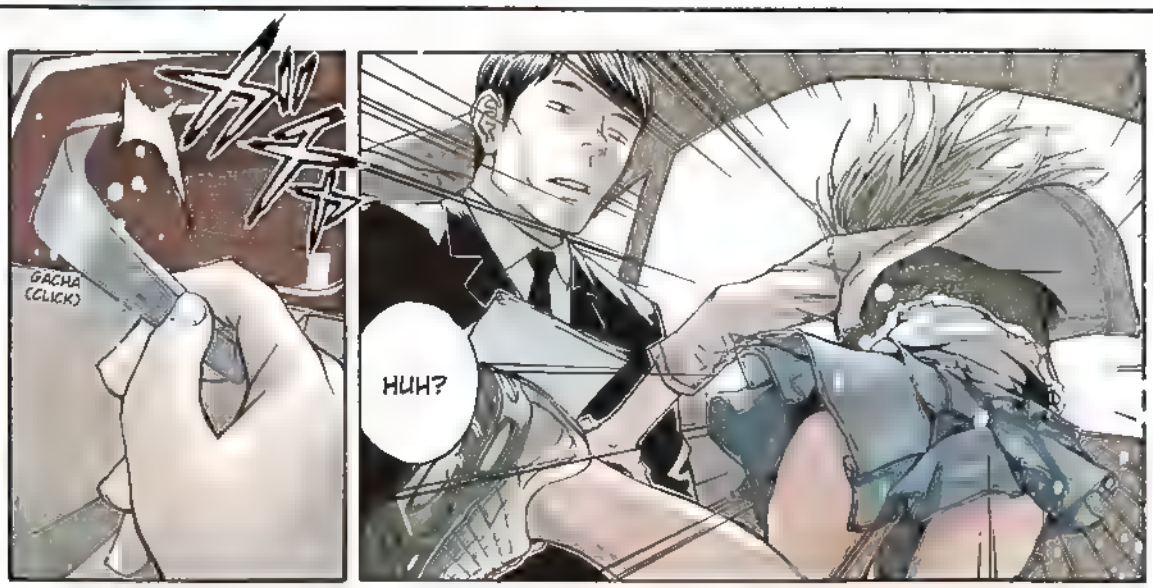



KOTSU (TAP)
KOTSU
...HE'S COMING...
COMING... VERY SOON.



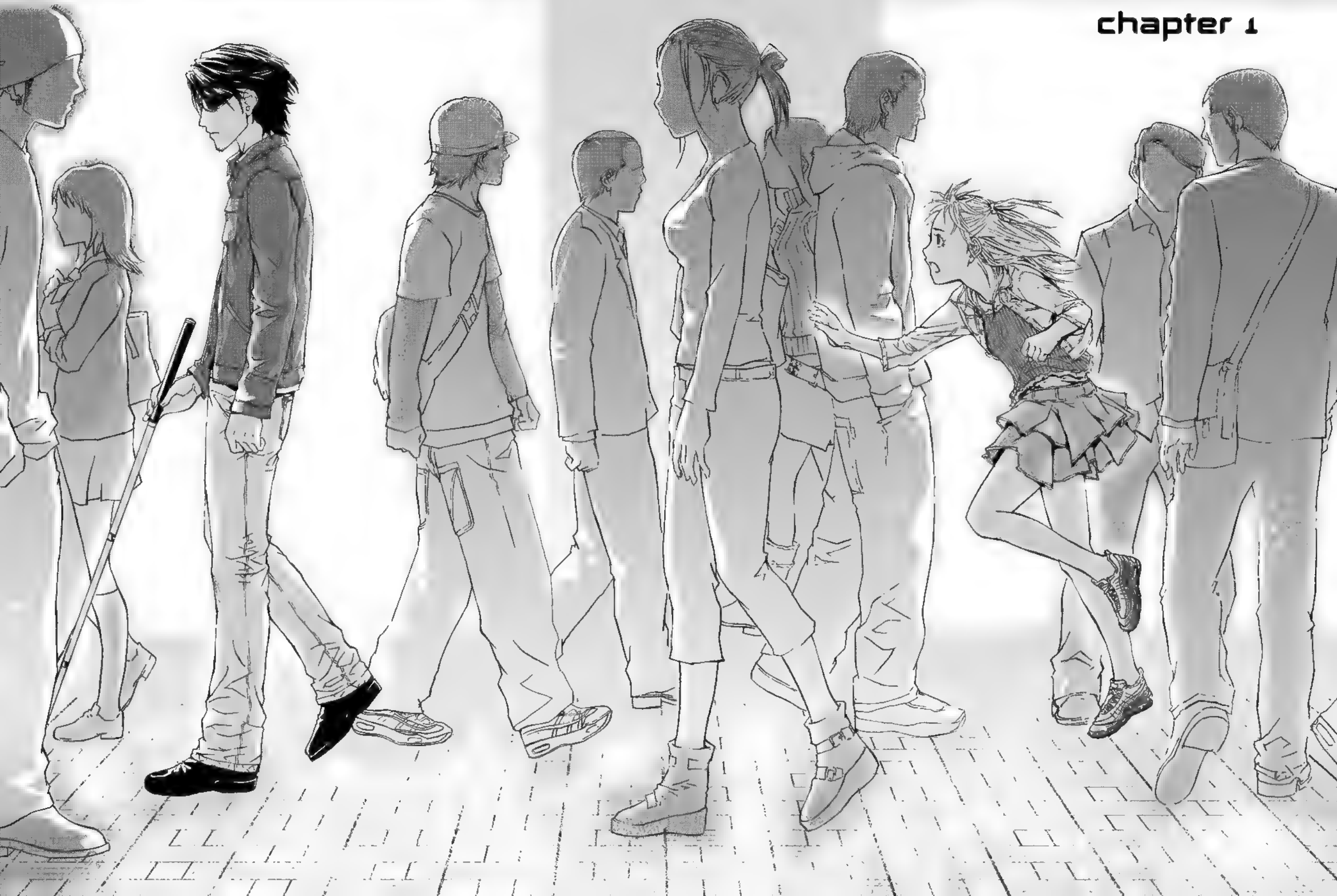

AH...


HE'S HERE!!


GACHA (CLICK)
HUH?

HUH?
WHAT'S GOING ON?
BA (LEAP)
HEY, STOP!
WHAT ARE YOU IDIOTS DOING!?
SHIT!
WAIT!
WAIT UP!!

chapter 1



chapter 1

渋谷センター街
Safe & Clean Campaign
...IT'S REAL STRANGE...
I CAN SURE SEE THE CONTOURS CLEAR AS DAY, BUT THE DETAILS ARE LOST ON ME...
It's still in the testing stages, but that's a projection directly onto your retinas.
And nobody can tell you're actually seeing anything.
SIGN: SHIBUYA TOWN CENTER

...WHEN I'M STANDING IN COMPLETE DARKNESS AND STICKING OUT LIKE A SORE THUMB.
WELL, I'M SURE THAT WILL BE A GREAT COMFORT ...
AND YOU'RE SURE THE LIGHT DOESN'T LEAK OUT?
Trust me on this. Even with a night-vision scope...
...it's no brighter than starlight.
..... Hey, it's a work in progress ...
TA (LEAP)
HELP ME!

WHAT'S THE MATTER, KID...?
HUH?
?
EH? WAIT—
THIS WAY!
H-HANG ON!
NO, WAIT— NOT THIS WAY!
OVER HERE!
WHAT?
PITA (FREEZE)
...
?

HURRY, HURRY!
.....WHAT THE...?
What's going on!?
Was there a malfunction!?
HANG ON— THERE'S A BIT OF TROUBLE ON MY END.
TEST'S CANCELED.
What!?
Hold it, man!

WHAT THE HELL IS GOING ON?
HEY.
HFF...
HFF!
WE'RE TRAPPED.
.....?

HARUKA, YOU'VE BEEN A VERY NAUGHTY GIRL.
I'LL LEAVE THE REST UP TO YOU.
?

YOU SHOULDN'T LEAP OUT OF THE CAR LIKE THAT, SWEETIE. NOW COME HERE.
SA (SWISH)
NINE TIMES OUTTA TEN, A GUY LIKE THIS IS YAKUZA.
What does that make him?
.....
Ahh...
.....
...BUT HE'S NOT A PRO EITHER.
...DOESN'T WALK LIKE AN AMATEUR...
HARUKA ...

HELP ME!!
I'LL DO ANYTHING! ANYTHING!

I'LL GIVE YOU ANYTHING! MONEY, JEWELS, ANYTHING!
THAT MEAN YOU WANT TO HIRE ME? I DON'T COME CHEAP.
!
.....
THAT DOESN'T HOLD MUCH INTEREST FOR ME...
...BUT ALL RIGHT.
YOU'VE GOT YOURSELF A DEAL.
THE CONTRACT WILL LAST...

...“UNTIL DEATH DO US PART.”

.....
WHAT A GROWN-UP THING FOR A LITTLE GIRL TO SAY...
I'M SERIOUS! IF YOU DON'T SAVE ME, I AM GOING TO DIE!
.....
WE'RE DOING A LIVE TEST.
NO TIME TO HESITATE.
We're not ready for battle ...
Huh? Live!?
CHA CHIKO

.....

-SNAP-

GET LOST, BOYS.
THE GIRL'S UNDER MY PROTEC-TION.

I DON'T KNOW WHO YOU WORK FOR, BUT I GOTTA ADVISE YOU TO STEP DOWN AND LEAVE.
THIS GUY HERE DOESN'T KNOW HOW TO PULL HIS PUNCHES.

ZU!
(LOOM)

ZUM (ZMM)
SHUT HIM UP.
YES, SIR.
THAT WAS ONE OF THE MOST TIRED THREATS I'VE EVER HEARD.
COULDN'T YOU HAVE COME UP WITH ANYTHING BETTER?
DO (STOMP)
DO
DO
DO
DO
RAAA AAAA AH!!

AGK!!
GA (THWUD)
BUN (SHOVE)
...BUT YOU'LL NEED TO TRY HARDER THAN THAT TO STOP ME!!
GRRGH!
IF YOU THOUGHT I'D BE A PUSHOVER BECAUSE I'M BLIND, YOU THOUGHT WRONG.
I DON'T KNOW IF YOU DID SUMO OR GRECO-ROMAN...

GET A STRETCHER AND TAKE THAT SACK OF FAT OUTTA HERE.
SHUSHASHA (SKIIID)
GAAHK!
THAT'S IT!!
PUT THOSE AWAY, YOU IDIOTS!
.....
WHAT IF YOU HIT THE GIRL!?

AHA.
SU (SSK)
UGH...
GU (TUG)
KACHA (CLICK)
?
SOUNDS LIKE YOU REALLY DON'T WANT HER HARMED.

.....A CONCEALED BLADE...!?
HUH?
BA
BA (LEAP)
AAAAAH! WH-WHAT THE FUCK, MAN?
PUT THAT THING DOWN!
!
DOSA
DOSA (THUD)
I WOULDN'T ASSUME A HAND-GUN GIVES YOU THE ADVANTAGE.

WE'LL JUST HAVE TO FIND OUT, WON'T WE?
WHAT !?
ZA (ZSHH)
GUNS CAN BE SURPRISINGLY INACCURATE. AT BEST, YOUR RANGE IS TWENTY TO TWENTY-FIVE FEET.
ANYTHING OUTSIDE OF THAT, IT'S BEST USED AS A THREAT ONLY.
AS LONG AS IT KEEPS ME OUTTA THE RANGE OF THAT BLADE!
WELL, AS TO THAT ...
DIE!
ZUGYUN (KBLAM)
ZUGYUN
KYUO (ZWOOSHH)

ZUA (SHWP)
WHA—

ZAN
(SLASH)

ZAN
(SLASH)

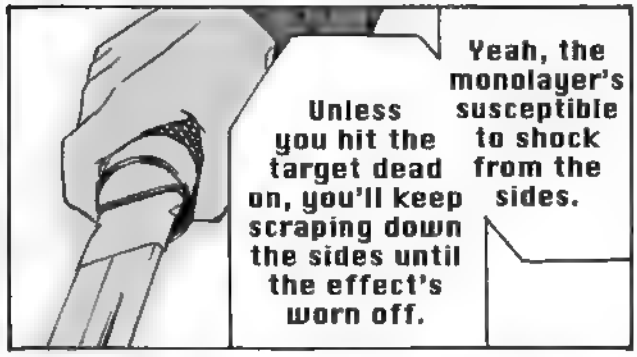
ZUDA (THWAM)
AAGH!!
GASHI (SNATCH)
NNGH...
THIS AIN'T NO ORDINARY BLADE.
IT CAN CARVE UP ANYTHING IN ITS REACH! NO EXCEPTIONS.
JA (SHKK)
...HOW IS THAT... POSS—?

OHH?
THEN WHO HIRED YOU?
...I WASN'T TOLD...
!
SO WHAT DO YOU WANT FROM THE GIRL?
.....
.....
AAGH!!
BOSU
CHA
CHAKO

GAKU (SLUMP)
.....
KAKUHOUKAI, HUH?
An organized crime syndicate, proteges of Ex Solid.
WELL, THAT OPENS AN UNPLEASANT CAN OF WORMS.
ESPECIALLY IF EX SOLID IS INVOLVED.

DAMN.
GUESS I NEED TO WORK ON MY AIM, THEN.
:CHAK:

BY THE WAY...
...I CAN TELL THE BLADE'S GONE JUST THE TINIEST BIT DULL.
HYUN (SWISH)


Yeah, the monolayer's susceptible to shock from the sides.
Unless you hit the target dead on, you'll keep scraping down the sides until the effect's worn off.

...WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL ABOUT THIS GIRL...?

NOW THE QUESTION IS...

HMM...
SURE, THEY'RE SCARY.
BUT THE GUYS WHO ARE HOLDING THEM AREN'T.
YOU AREN'T SCARED OF GUNS?
.....
?
WHAT ABOUT YOUR PARENTS?
ピタッ
PITA (FREEZE)

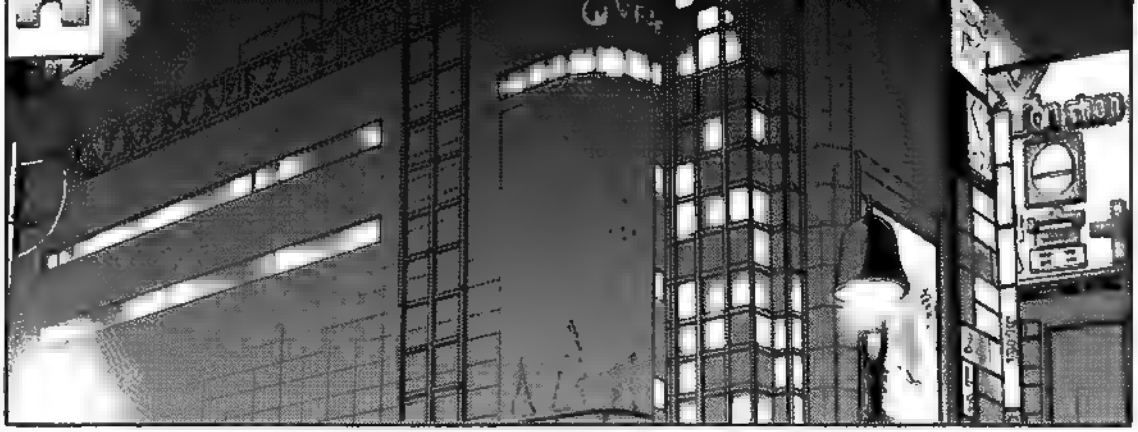
WAAAAH!!
BOSA (THUD)
HIC... AHH...
NNH ...
UNNGH ...
UUH... UNNH...

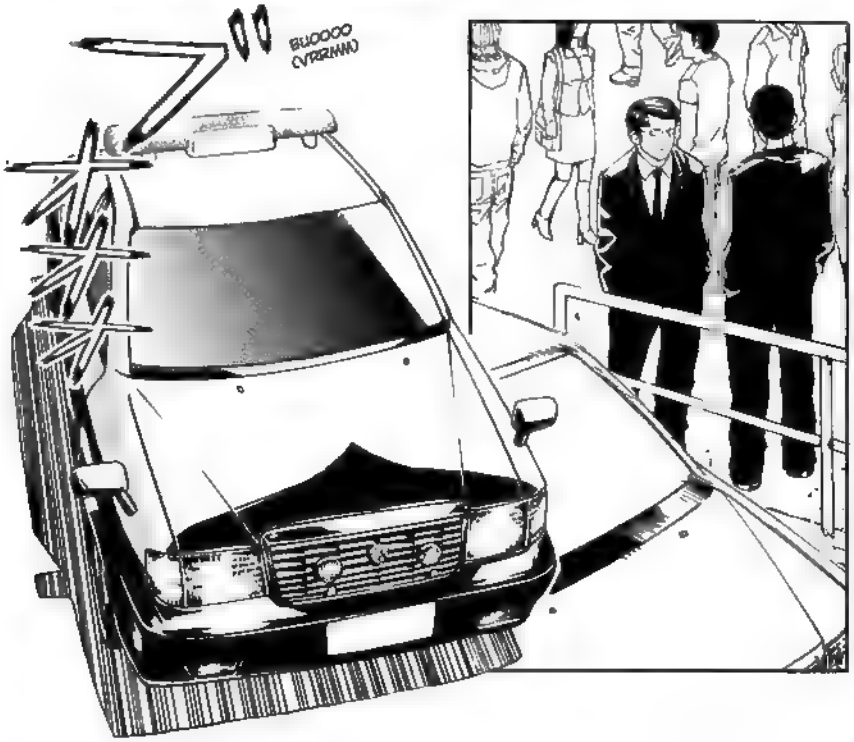
WHAT?
SHE WAS KID-NAPPED !?

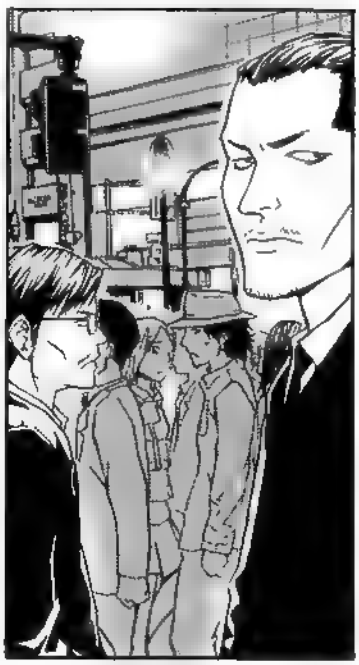
OF COURSE HE WASN'T.
THE ONLY WAY IT HAPPENED...
YES, SIR...
BUT ACCORDING TO THE REPORT, IT DOESN'T SOUND LIKE THE GUY WAS WORKING WITH HARUKA.
...WAS BECAUSE OF HARUKA'S RARE GIFT FOR PRECOGNITION— WELL OVER 90% OF HER VISIONS COME TRUE!
SHE WAS SIMPLY WAITING FOR THE RIGHT PERSON SHE KNEW WAS CAPABLE OF HELPING HER.
AND IF WE DON'T GET HER BACK, THE BRIGHT FUTURE WE HAD IN OUR HANDS CRUMBLES INTO DUST.

I DON'T CARE WHAT IT TAKES! JUST FIND OUT WHERE SHE IS AND GET HER BACK!!

chapter 2




BUOOOO
(VRRRMM)



...I COULD HAVE SWORN THAT WAS...
WHAT'S THE MATTER?
NOTHING.

AH!
...JUST LOOK AT THIS THING...
WE'RE TALKING TO WITNESSES...
...AND WHAT'S THIS...?
GOOD EVENING, SIR.
EVENING.
NO PUSHING, PLEASE!
WE'VE GOT FOUR MEMBERS OF KAKUHOUKAI ARRESTED ON WEAPONS CHARGES.

WE FOUND THIS...
WHATCHA GOT THERE?
...AND?
IT'S NOT TYPICAL YAKUZA HARD-WARE, BUT...
GENDA-SAN!
JUST WATCH.
GACHA (CLICK)
SIG SAUER
PAKI (CRACK)
GU (TUG)
?

IT EVEN STILL FUNCTIONS, THOUGH I WOULDN'T WANT TO FIRE IT.
PUT THE PIECES TOGETHER, AND THEY STICK LIKE THEY'VE BEEN GLUED.
PITA (SQUISH)
THIS IS THE GUN THAT WAS SLICED IN HALF.
M.P.D
WHOA!
WHAT IS THAT?
...BUT IT'S AS IF THE CUT IS SO CLEAN THAT THE INTERMOLECULAR FORCE ACTUALLY HOLDS THE PIECES TOGETHER.
...FOR THE MOMENT, WE CAN ONLY SPECULATE ...
... INTER- WHAT ...??
PAKI (STICK)
YOU KNOW HOW YOU CAN PLACE TWO SHEETS OF GLASS TOGETHER, AND THEY STICK?
IT'S LIKE THAT.
M.P.D
...HOW IS THAT POSSIBLE ...!?

.....
I CAN'T THINK OF ANY PIECE OF EQUIPMENT THAT COULD REPLICATE SOMETHING LIKE THIS.
ACTUALLY, BASED ON THE COHESION HERE, IT'S EVEN SMOOTHER.
...ARE AS SMOOTH AS PANES OF GLASS?
YOU'RE SAYING THE SIDES OF THIS CUT...
THOUGH I DON'T THINK THAT COULD HAVE MADE THE CUT TO THE GUN.
HA-HA, COULD BE POSSIBLE.
LIKE THE BLUNT EDGE OF A KATANA?
YES. THAT, AT LEAST, WE'RE SURE OF.
AND YOU SAID THE WOUNDS ON THE VICTIMS CORRESPOND TO A HARD, THIN, BLUNT OBJECT?
I SUPPOSE NOT...
.....
MPD

...COULD THAT HAVE BEEN WHO I THINK IT WAS...?
GABA
GRAB
!

ZUZU (DRAG)

DOSU (WHAM)
URGH!

GET BACK HOME ON YOUR OWN.
ONCE WE GET PAST THEIR SECURITY, THAT'S IT.

……
スゥ
BA
(ANATOMO)

BYUU (SWOOSH)
AH...
WH...
WHAT?
KACHIRI (CLICK)
SO YOU REALLY CAN'T SEE.
BUT YOU MOVE SO FLUIDLY...

.....
?
?
WHAT'S WRONG?
YEAH.
SU
SU (SWISH)
...HOW DID SHE SURPRISE ME LIKE THAT...?
HARUKA TOOYAMA.
WHAT'S YOUR NAME?
UMM...
...MY NAME IS HARUKA ...

OH, BECAUSE YOU "HIRED" ME?
DON'T WORRY. I TOOK ON THE JOB BECAUSE I WANTED TO— NO JEWELS OR CASH NECESSARY.
...I SAVED YOUR LIFE ON A WHIM...NOT SO WE COULD BE FRIENDS...
BUT...
BUT IF YOU'RE NOT AROUND TO STOP THEM, THEY'LL KILL ME.
.....
THAT'S WHY I NEED YOU WITH ME!
I'LL DO ANYTHING FOR YOU!
LOOK, I'M NOT INTERESTED IN KIDS.

DO YOU EVEN KNOW?
.....
...WHY ARE THEY AFTER YOU?
MORE IMPOR-TANTLY ...
...TO HANDLE ONE LITTLE GIRL?
WHY DO THEY NEED SO MANY MEN...

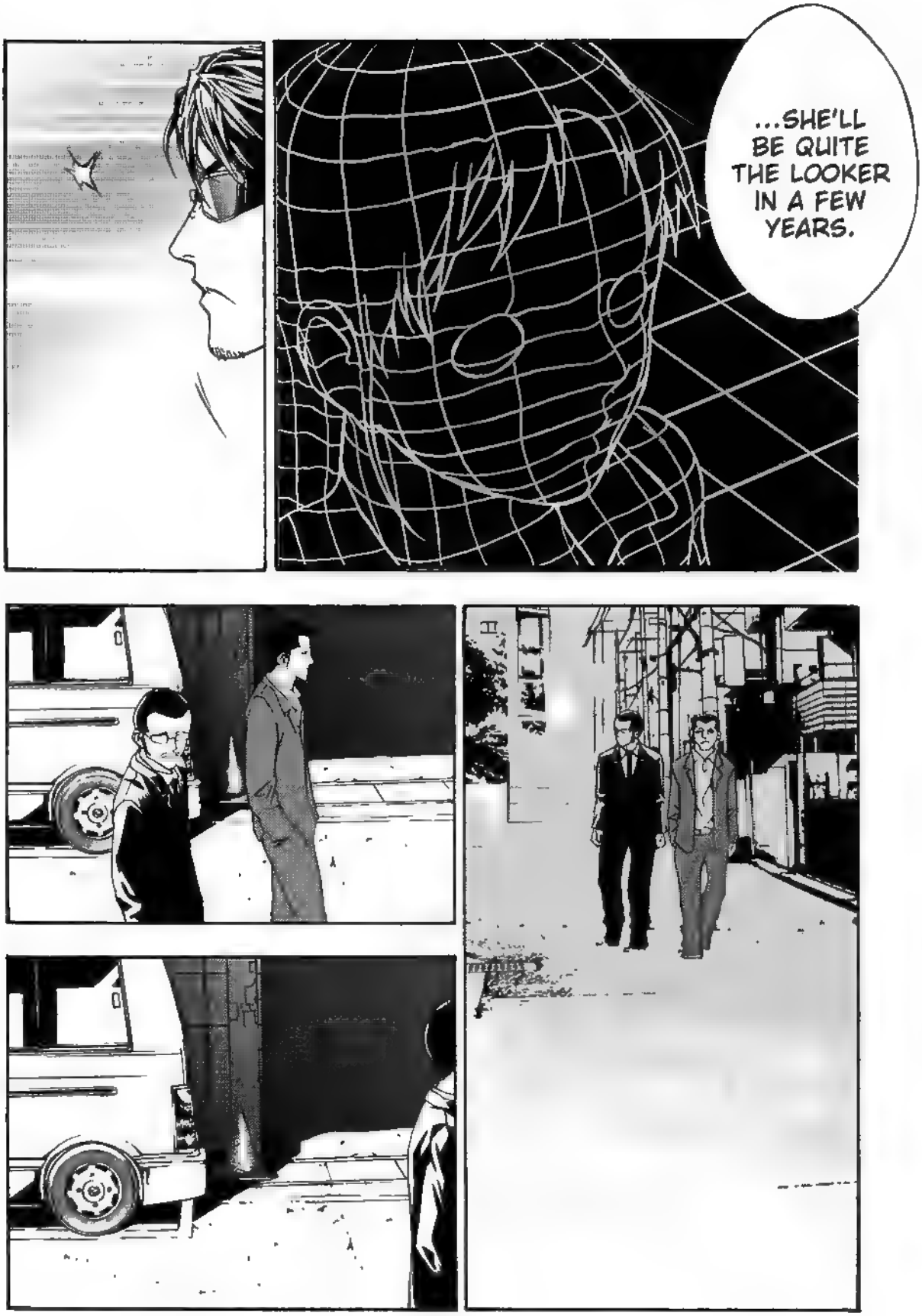
TH-
THERE
HE IS!
AH—
DOKA
(KADOW)
AGH!

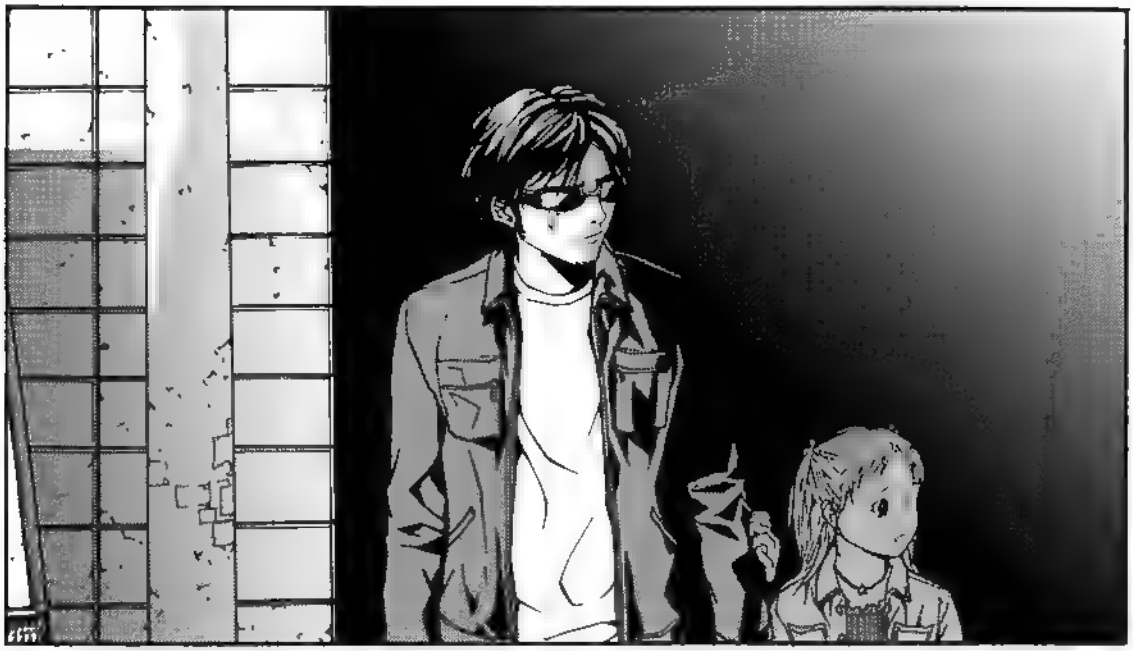
YOU'RE GOIN' DOWN!!
PAAN CTHWACK

HRRGH...
DO (THUD)
IT'S SAFE NOW.

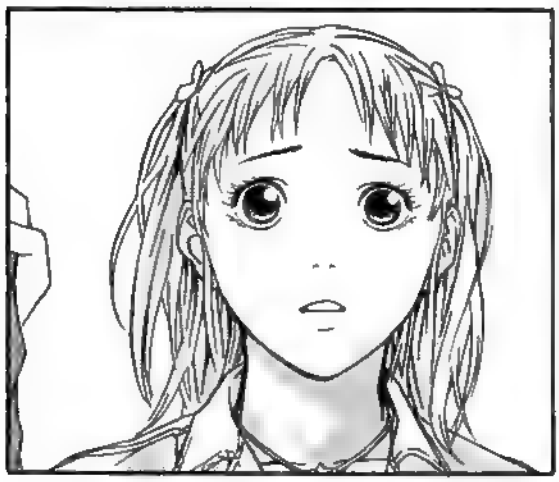
SA (STRIDE)
AH.
.....
I'm jealous, man.
Just minutes after you meet her, the girl proposes to you?
When have you ever heard "until death do us part"...
...and it wasn't during a wedding?
Yeah, but...
...IT WASN'T LIKE THAT...

I'M SERIOUS! IF YOU DON'T SAVE ME...
...I AM GOING TO DIE!
NOT QUITE ...
IT WAS MORE OF A... DESPERATION THING...
YOU THINK I CAN TELL?
...Oh yeah... sorry ...
Wasn't thinking ...
Well? Is she cute?
Desper-ation, huh?
.....
BASED ON THE CONTOURS OF HER FACE AND THE PLACE-MENT OF HER FEATURES...


...SHE'LL BE QUITE THE LOOKER IN A FEW YEARS.



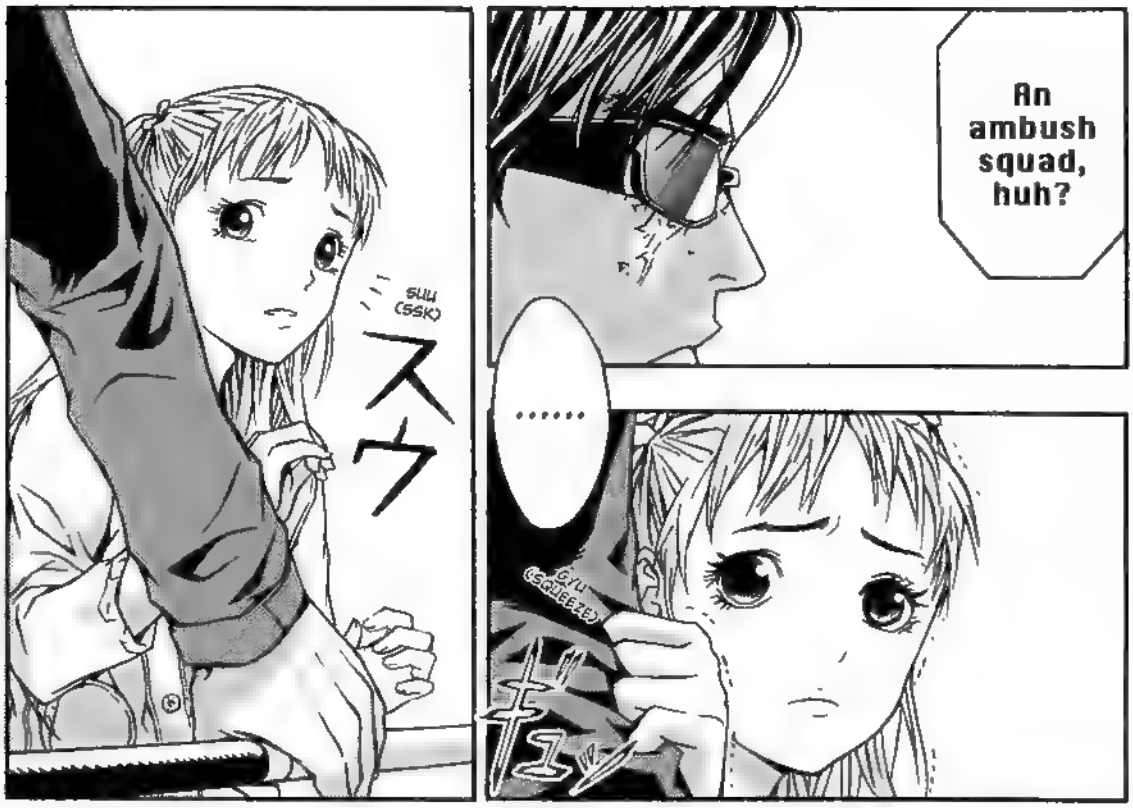
ピタ
PITA
(FREEZE)



...The problem is...we've got this huge job coming up...

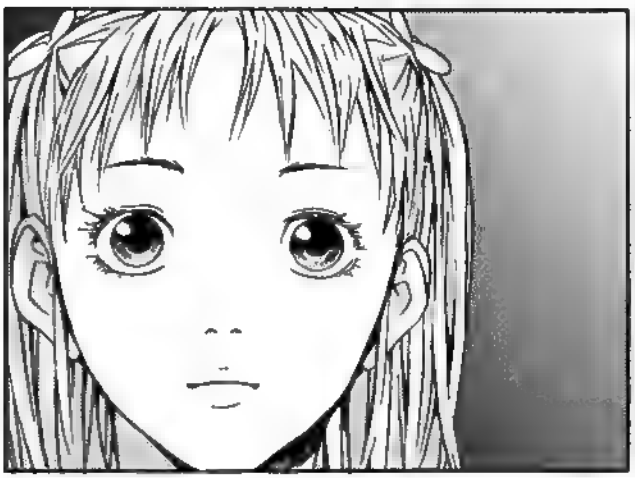
ZORO (SHUFFLE)
ZORO
THERE THEY ARE! WE FOUND 'EM!

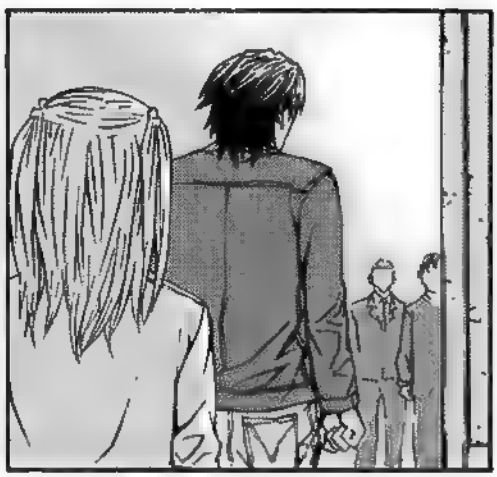
YEAH.
GET MORE MEN OVER HERE.


An ambush squad, huh?
.....
SUU (SSK)
スゥ
GYU (SQUEEZE)
ギュ

I'M MAMORU...

MAMORU HIJIKATA.



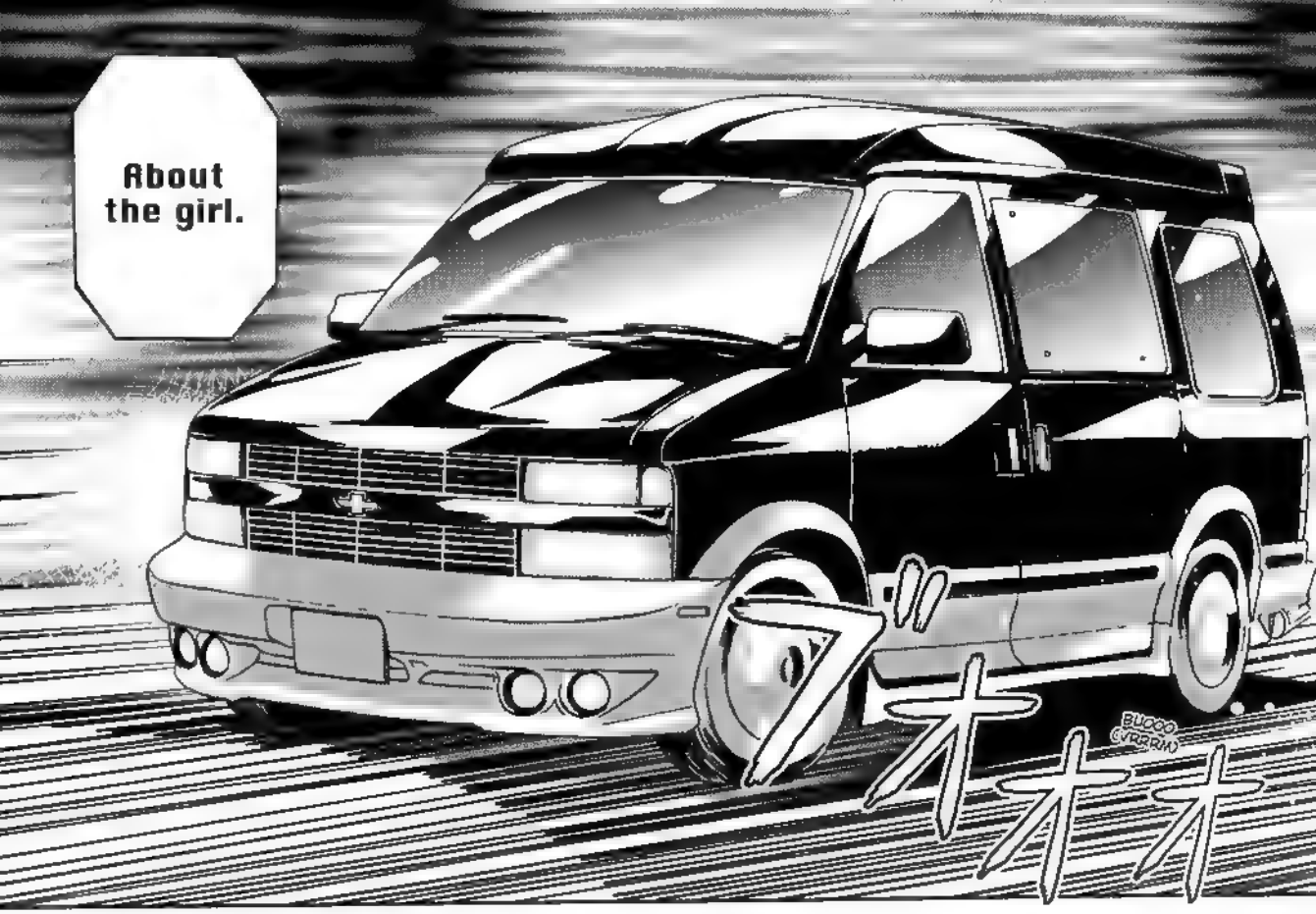


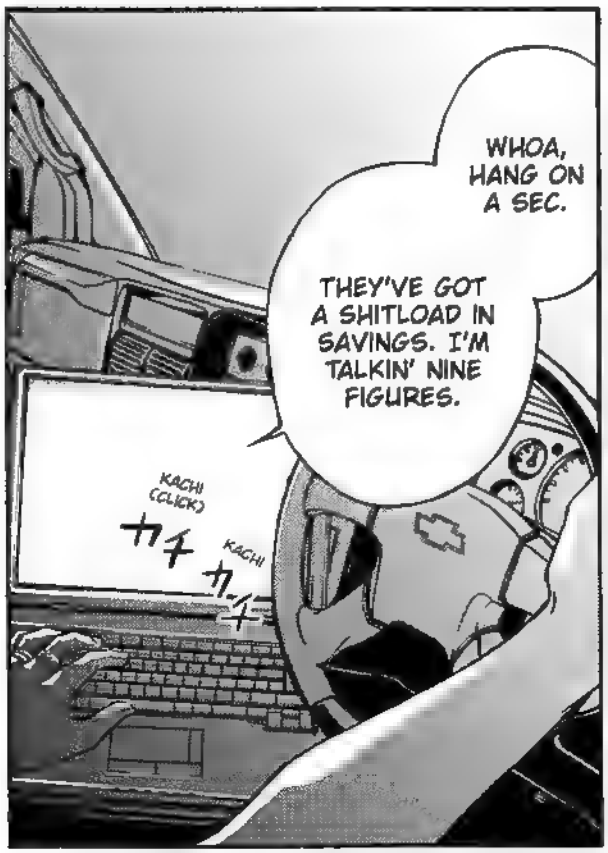
KILL HIM!
!
DA
(DASH)
DA
DA

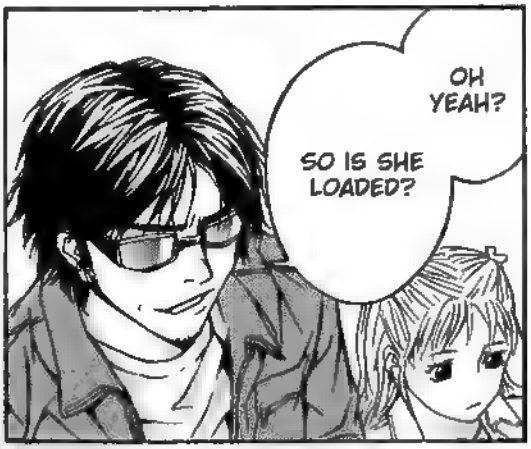
KIKII
KIKII (SCREECH)
WHAT... THE FUCK ...?
TATA (SLAM)
DADA (SLAM)

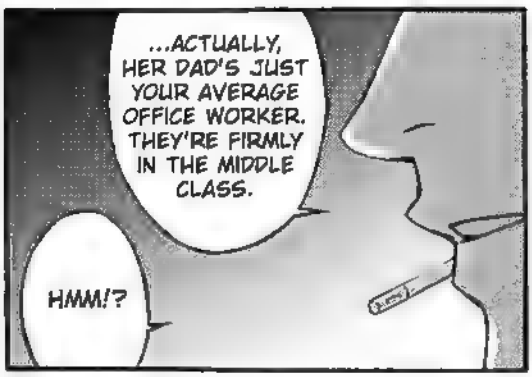
chapter 3

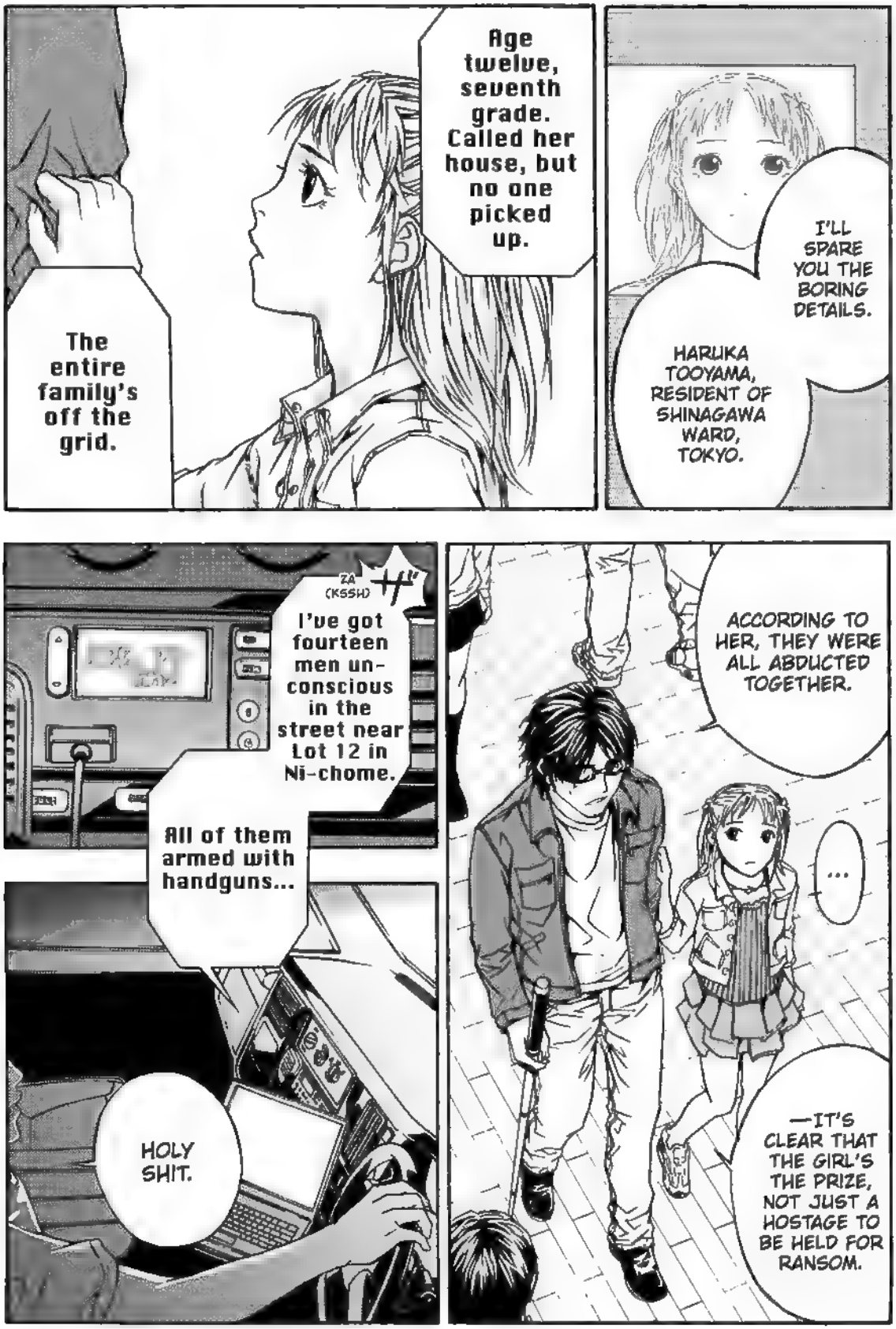
SO IF I CHANGE UP WHICH PART OF THE MONOLAYER I'M USING TO CUT STUFF, IT'LL HOLD UP A BIT LONGER?
Yeah...
But you shouldn't need it again tonight.
By the way, I did a bit of research.
?


About the girl.
ブロロロ (VRRRM)

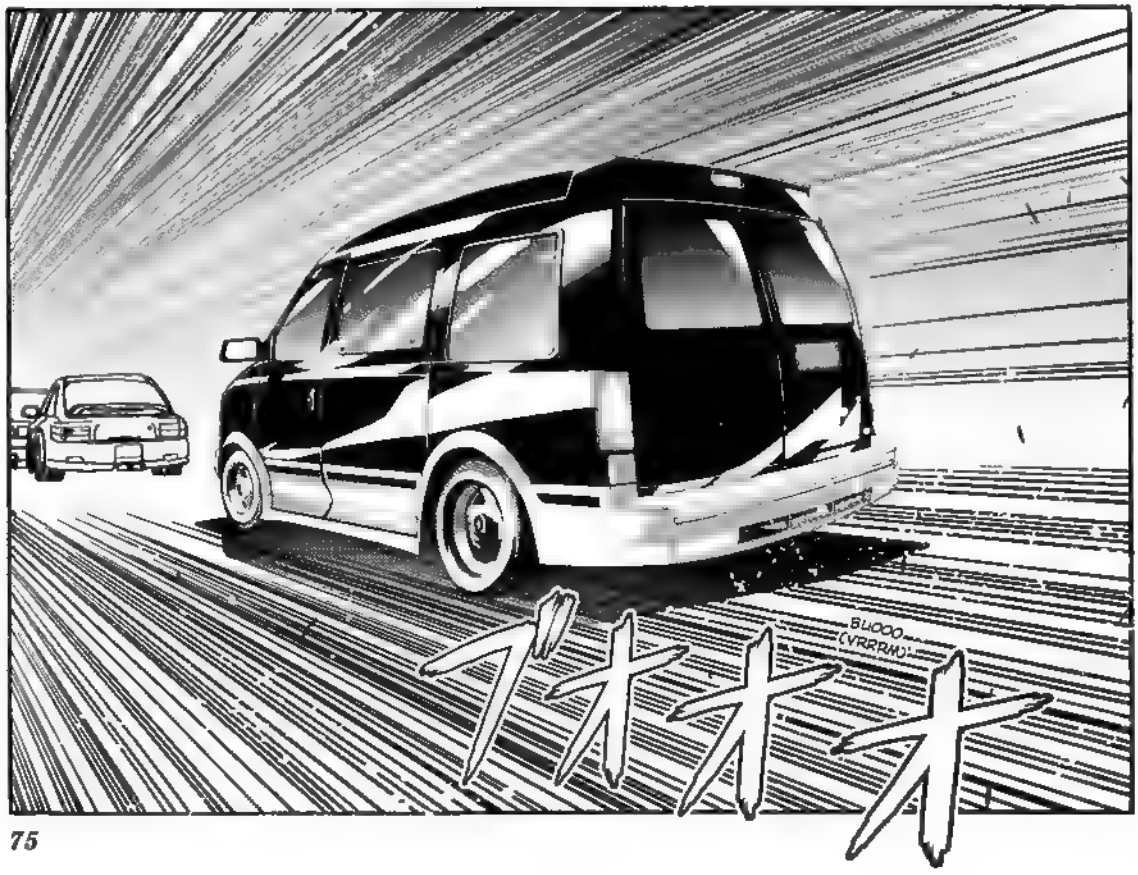

WHOA, HANG ON A SEC.
THEY'VE GOT A SHITLOAD IN SAVINGS. I'M TALKIN' NINE FIGURES.
KACHI (CLICK)
KACHI

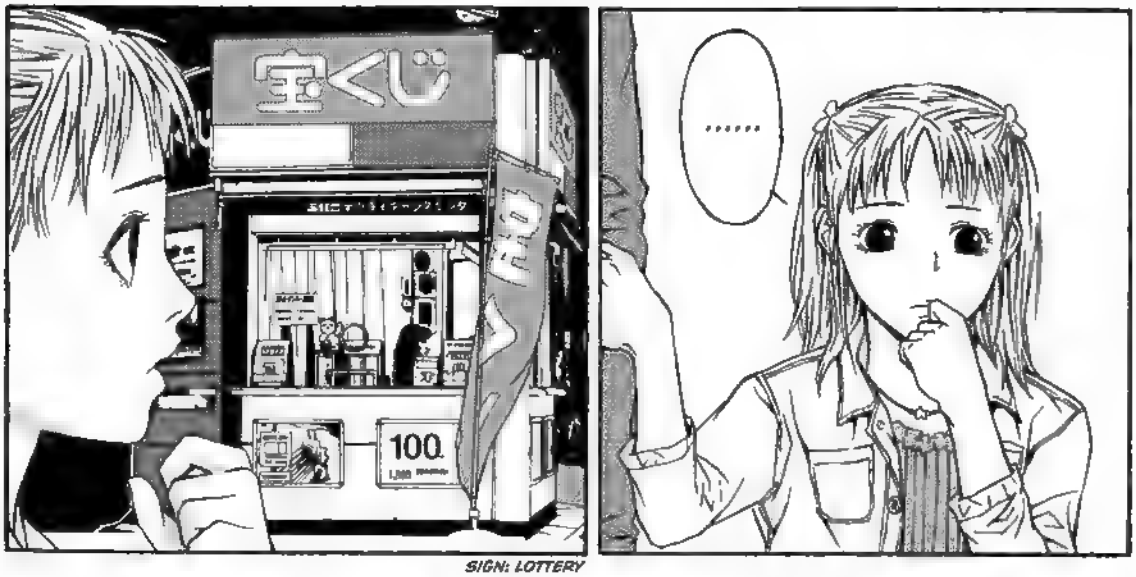

OH YEAH?
SO IS SHE LOADED?


...ACTUALLY, HER DAD'S JUST YOUR AVERAGE OFFICE WORKER. THEY'RE FIRMLY IN THE MIDDLE CLASS.
HMM!?

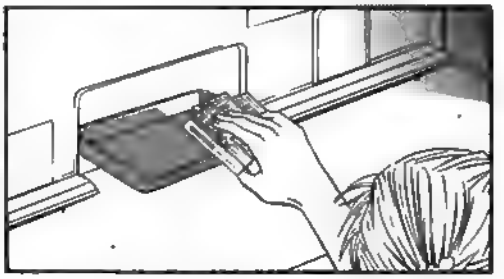

Age twelve, seventh grade. Called her house, but no one picked up.
The entire family's off the grid.
I'LL SPARE YOU THE BORING DETAILS.
HARUKA TOOYAMA, RESIDENT OF SHINAGAWA WARD, TOKYO.
ZA (KSSH)
I've got fourteen men unconscious in the street near Lot 12 in Ni-chome.
All of them armed with handguns...
HOLY SHIT.
ACCORDING TO HER, THEY WERE ALL ABDUCTED TOGETHER.
...
—IT'S CLEAR THAT THE GIRL'S THE PRIZE, NOT JUST A HOSTAGE TO BE HELD FOR RANSOM.

HOLD TIGHT FOR NOW. I'LL BE THERE SOON.
GACHA (CHUNK)
WE HAVEN'T EVEN MADE A MOVE YET, AND YOU'RE ALREADY WRITING HEADLINES OVER THERE.
SHUT UP.
WHAT'S THE PLAN?


BLOOO (VRRRM)

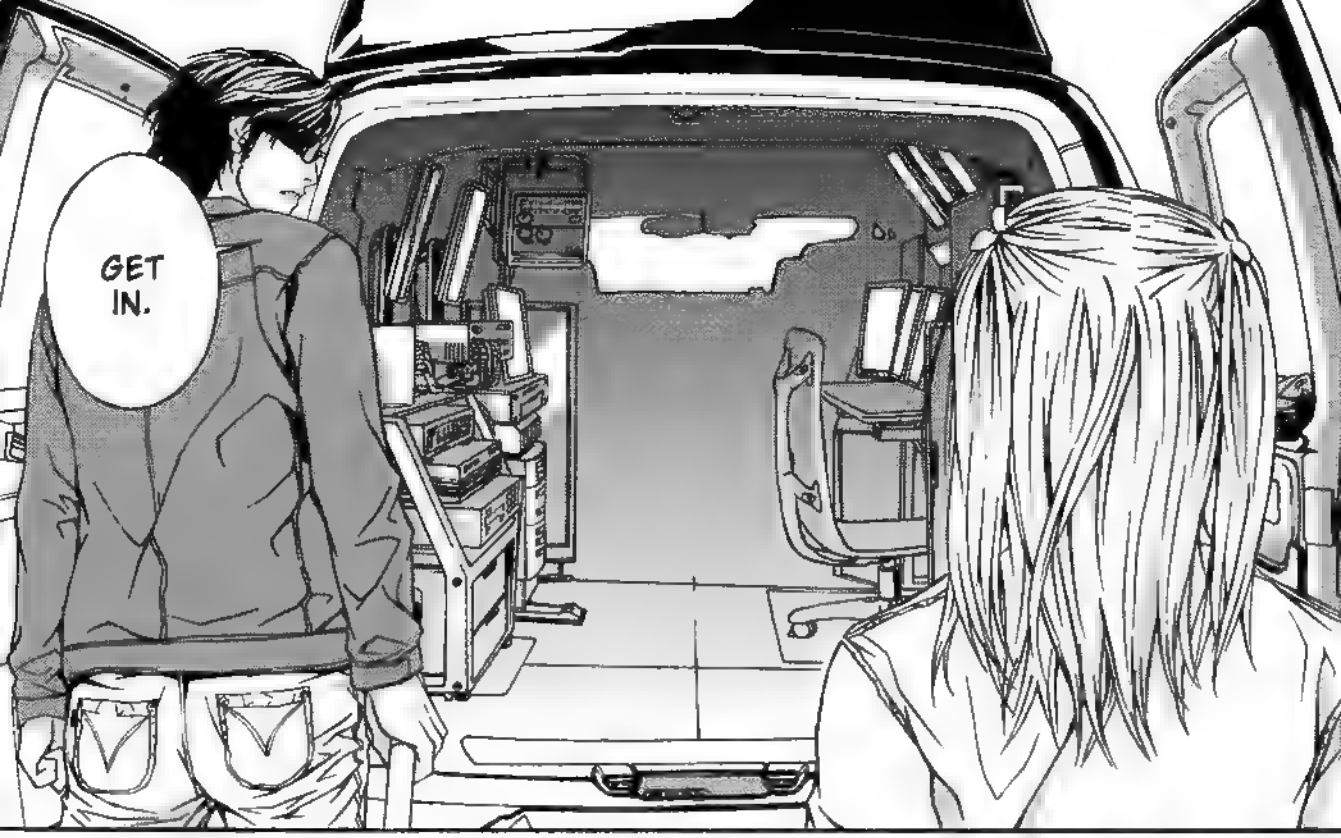


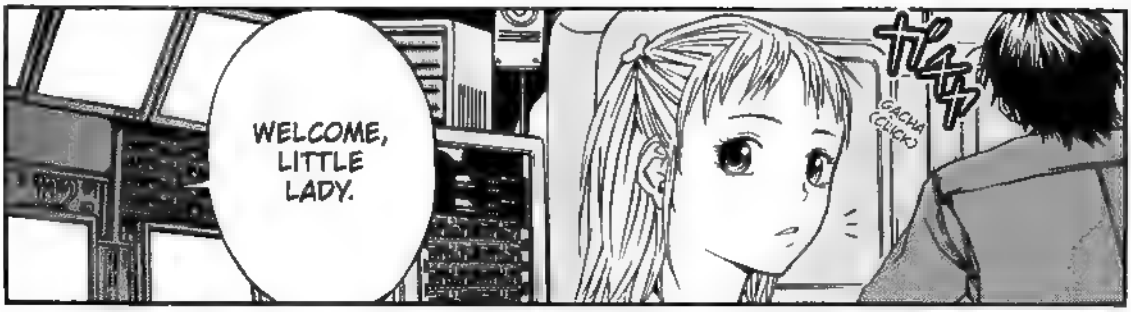
SIGN: LOTTERY



SIGN: HAVE A LITTLE DREAM FOR JUST ¥100.

GAAAA
(VRUUNN)
?
BAN
(WHAM)
KIKII
(SCREECH)


GET IN.


WELCOME, LITTLE LADY.
GACHA (CLICK)

KURU (SPIN)
...WAS RECRUITED FOR HIS OVER-WHELMING TALENT.
MAMORU-SAN HERE...

...YOU HAVE QUITE AN EYE FOR QUALITY, MISS.
I GOTTA SAY...

IT'S LUCKY THAT HE WAS THE ONE YOU ASKED FOR HELP.
ZERO OR DIE
ONE BLOOD
I THINK SHE KNEW...
...IT WASN'T LUCK.

DON'T WORRY, I'M NOT GONNA HURT YOU.
JUST NEED TO CHECK FOR SOMETHING.
UH...
scanner
UMM...
WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY THAT...!?
HUH?
scanner
HERE WE GO.
→BEE-BEEP←
scanner
→BEEP←
YOU FIND IT?
...BUT IT WILL GIVE YOU A GENERAL DIRECTION IF YOU'RE CLOSE ENOUGH TO PICK UP THE SIGNAL.
WELL... IT'S NOTHING PARTICULARLY FANCY...

BUH-BYE!
POI (TOSS)
BASED ON THEIR AMBUSH ATTEMPT, I WOULDN'T HAVE EXPECTED ANYTHING BETTER.
ZERO DIE
UIIII (VWEE)
PATA (SQUISH)
...HMM, I SEE...
I THINK YOUR ASSESSMENT WAS CORRECT.
SHE'S GOT A BRIGHT AND BEAUTIFUL FUTURE.

UMM...
HUH?
AND IF YOU DISAP-PEAR... I.....
PLEASE DON'T GO.
...IT'S TOO DANGEROUS FOR YOU TO GO THERE...
...HOW IS IT DANGEROUS ...?
?

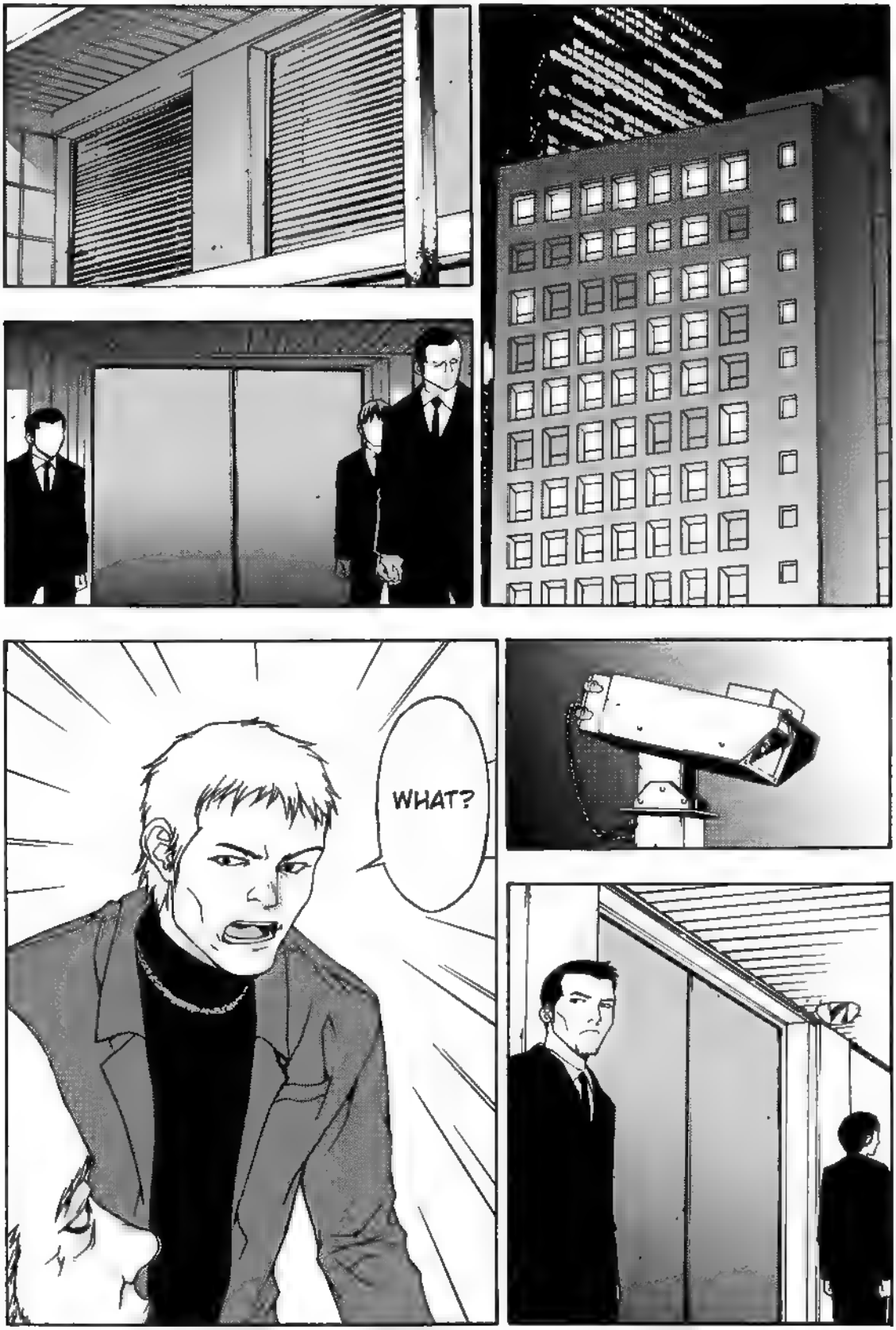
THE WALLS ARE GOING TO COME DOWN.
YOU NEED TO BE CAREFUL...
.....
KIKI (SCREECH)
PAAA (HONK!)
WAIT...
WHERE WERE YOU GONNA GO?
TOKYO OFFICE OF THE KAKU-HOUKAI.

YOU KNOW HOW I HATE "ISSUES."
I'D RATHER JUST BE PROACTIVE AND CLEAR UP THE GIRL'S PROBLEM AT ITS SOURCE.
WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU THINKING!? THAT PLACE IS A GODDAMN FORTRESS!!
—TCH...
I SUPPOSE THERE'S NO DISSUADING YOU ONCE YOU'VE MADE UP YOUR MIND.
Y-YOU CAN'T BE SERIOUS!
NO USE WASTING A GOOD OPPOR-TUNITY, RIGHT?
WE SHOULD TEST OUT SOME OF THIS OTHER EQUIPMENT TOO.
...PARDON ME...
...WHAT EXACTLY DO YOU...UM... DO?

WE'RE CROOKS.
WE'RE THE GOOD GUYS!

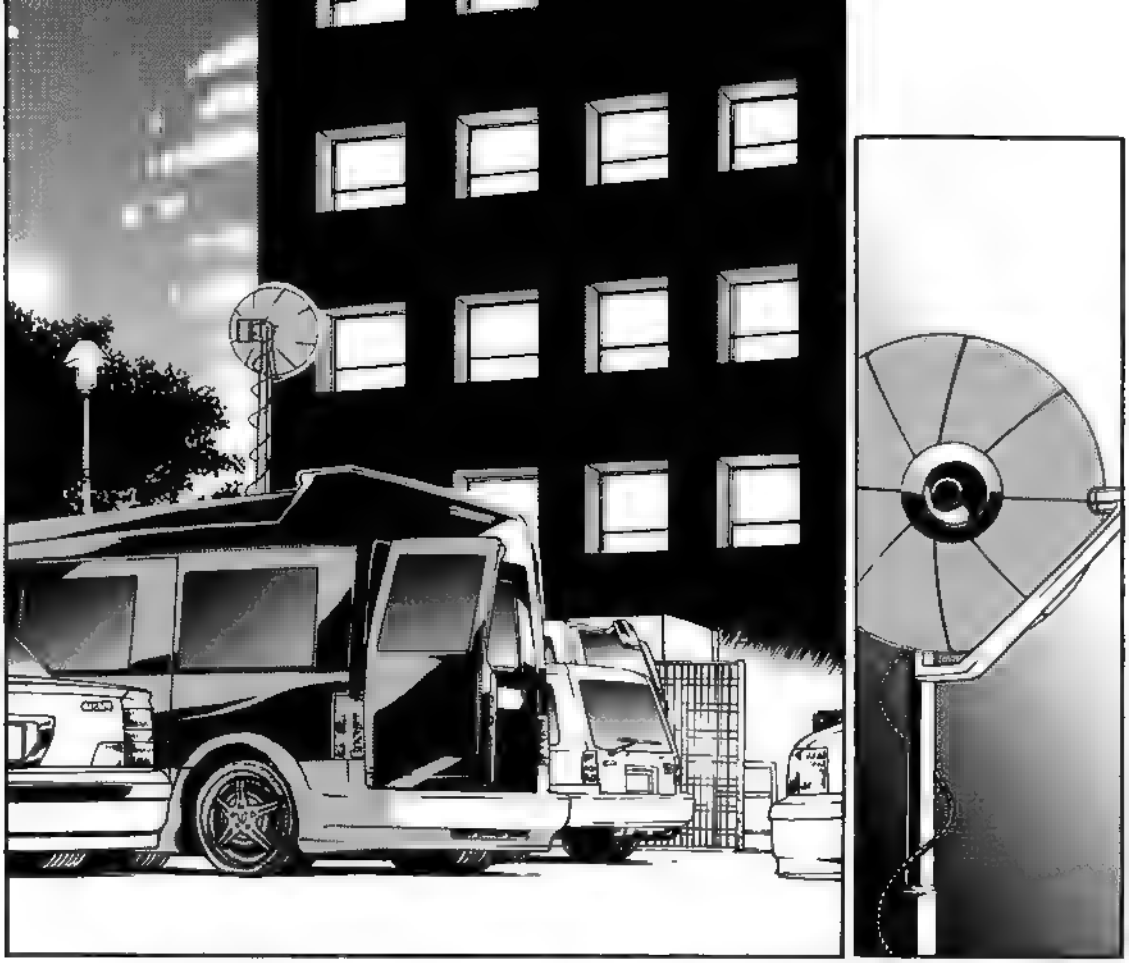
HUH...?

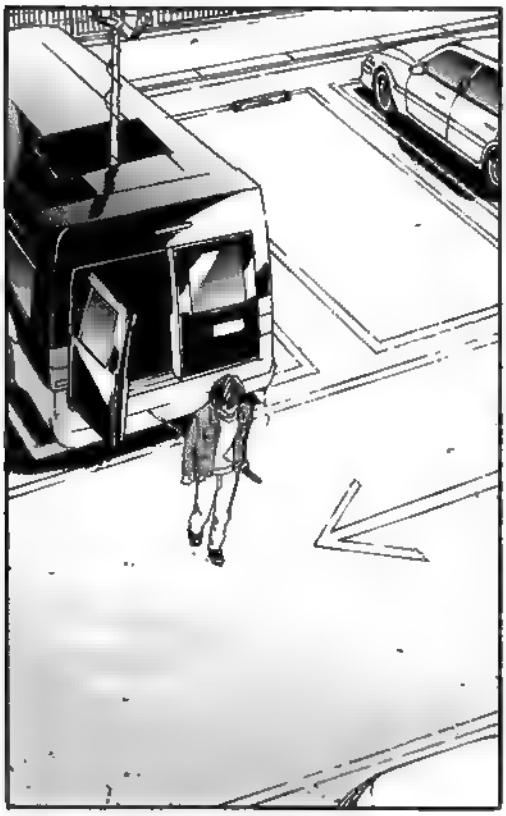
WELL, WE ARE COMMITTING CRIMES.
C'MON!
WHY DO YOU HAVE TO SAY IT LIKE THAT!?


WHAT?

HAVING PREMONI-TIONS...
...AIN'T THE SAME AS BEING OMNIPOTENT.
HOW DO YOU CATCH SOMEONE LIKE THAT?
THAT GIRL CAN...
...SEE... THE FUTURE ...?
ANYWAY, EX SOLID WANTS IT DONE.
WHAT DOES IT MATTER IF SHE HAS PRE-MONITIONS OR NOT?
I SEE...
Kiyohara swings— and it's a line drive!
It's going deep...
IT JUST MEANS YOUR INSTINCT FOR SELF-PRESERVA-TION IS STRONGER ...
...THAT'S ALL.
A three-run homer to take the lead!
...and gone!
THE POINT IS, TAKING CARE OF ONE LITTLE GIRL MEANS MAKING A TON OF CASH FOR THE ORGANIZATION.

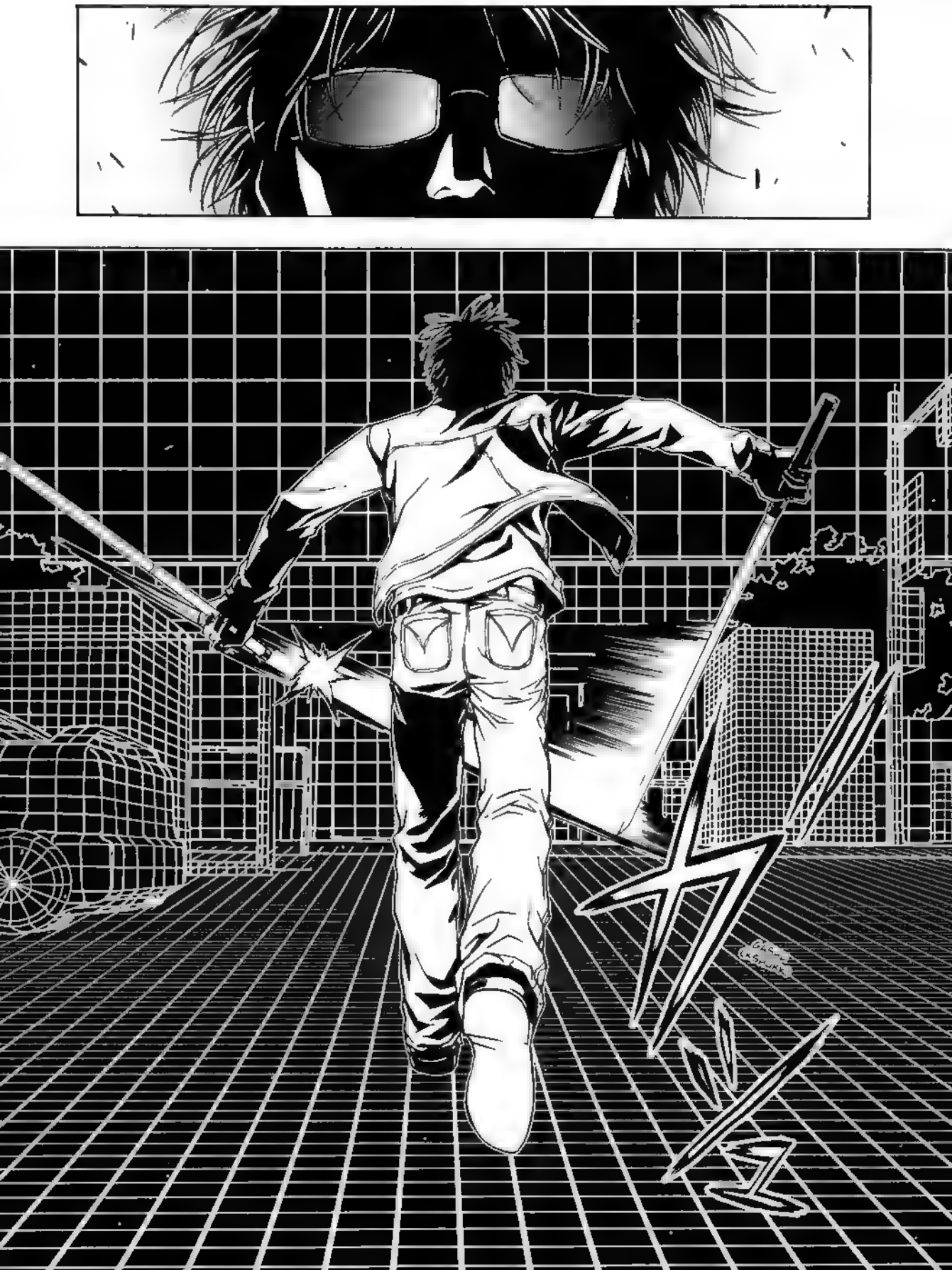
ZA (ZSH)
AAAH!
ZZASA (ZZT)
WHAT'S GOING ON?
BU (FFSH)
?
HUH?
...
WHAT HAP-PENED !?
YOU GETTING ANY-THING?
THE LINE'S DOWN.
?
BLACK-OUT?
KACHI (CLICK)
KACHI
KACHI
BACHI (ZZAP)
BOSHU (BSSHT)
BACHI

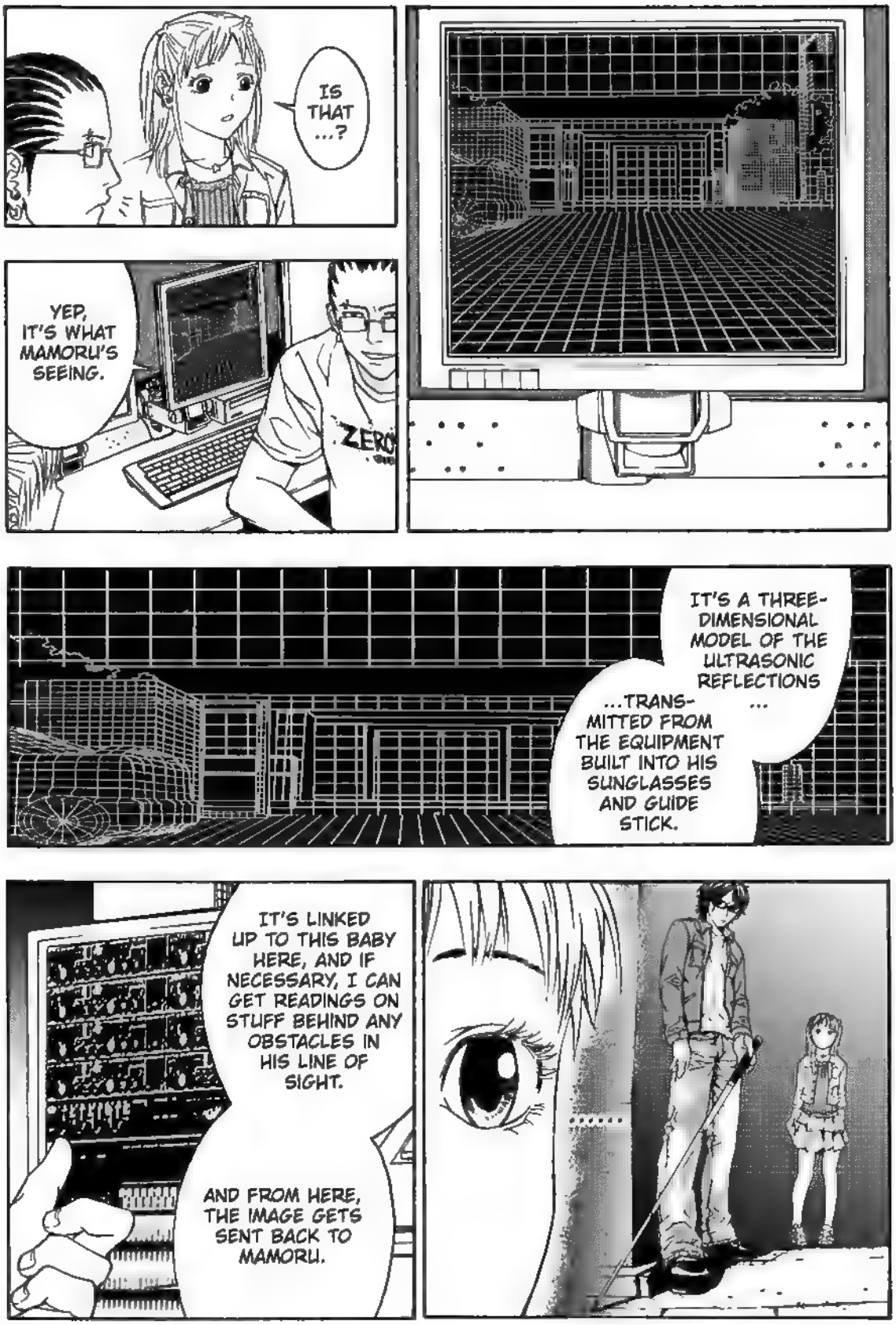




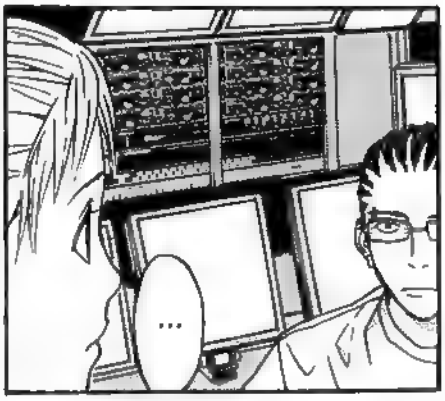
THEIR ELECTRONICS ARE ALL DOWN.
OKAY.

GOOD.



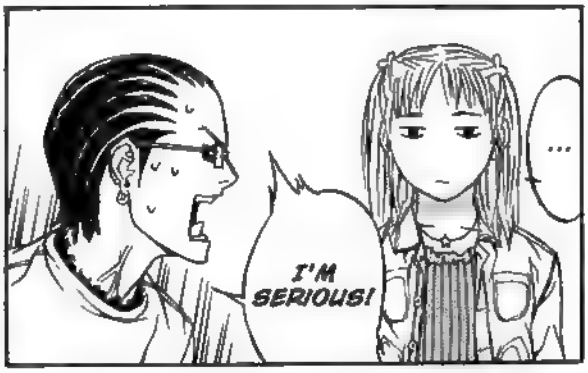

IS THAT ...?
YEP, IT'S WHAT MAMORU'S SEEING.
ZERO
IT'S A THREE-DIMENSIONAL MODEL OF THE ULTRASONIC REFLECTIONS ...
...TRANS-MITTED FROM THE EQUIPMENT BUILT INTO HIS SUNGLASSES AND GUIDE STICK.
IT'S LINKED UP TO THIS BABY HERE, AND IF NECESSARY, I CAN GET READINGS ON STUFF BEHIND ANY OBSTACLES IN HIS LINE OF SIGHT.
AND FROM HERE, THE IMAGE GETS SENT BACK TO MAMORU.
.....

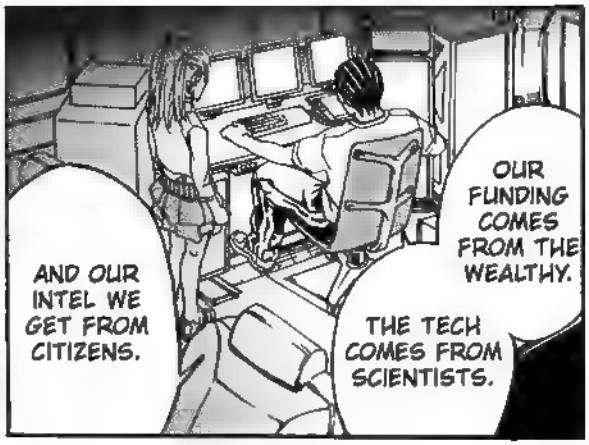
OUR REAL JOB IS "HUNTING CRIME."
WE TAKE ON THE CASES TOO MESSY FOR THE COPS TO HANDLE...
...AND CLEAN 'EM UP BY FORCE.

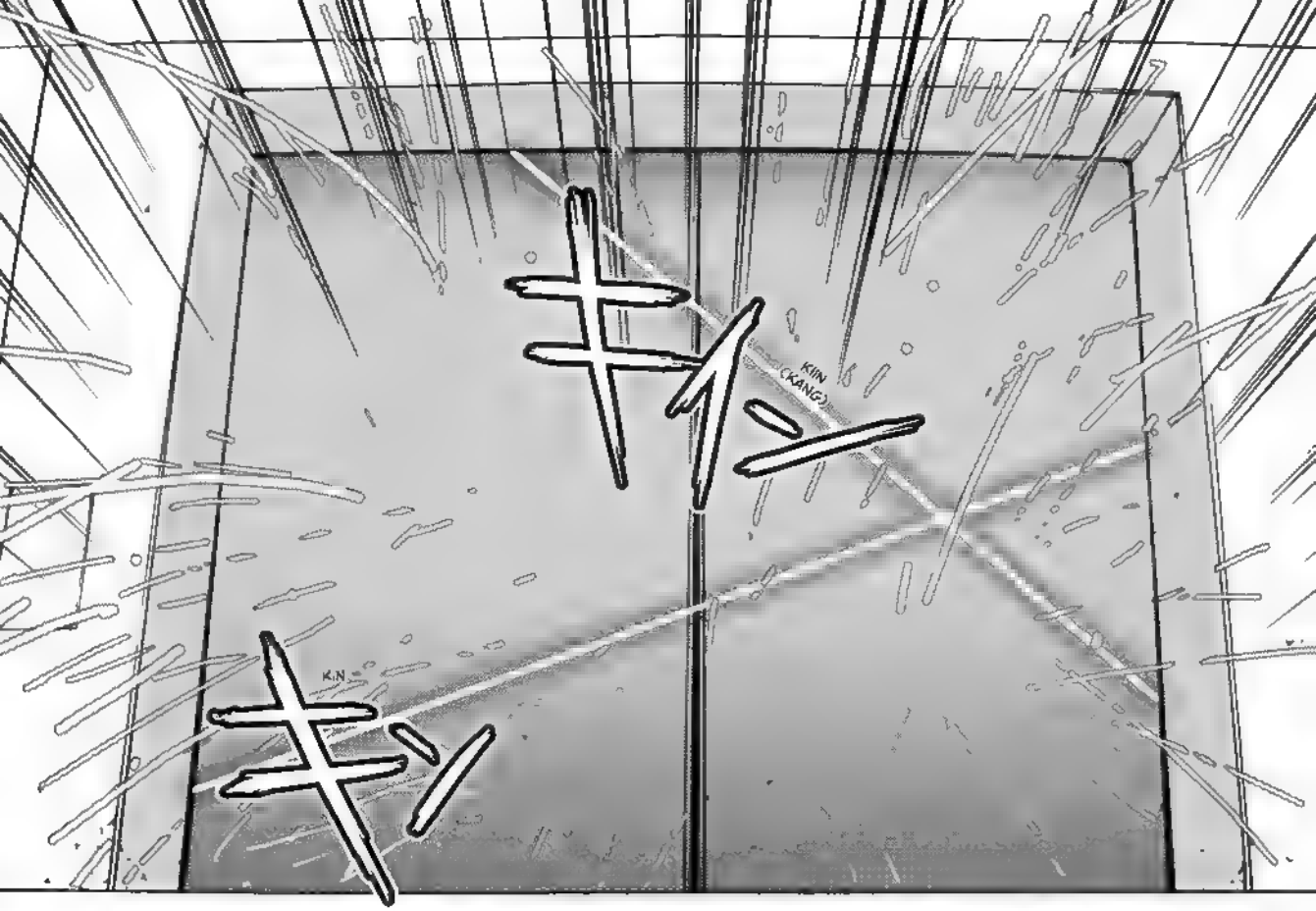

...

LOOK, THIS IS A SECRET, OKAY?

ACTUALLY, YOU COULD PROBABLY TELL WHO-EVER YOU WANT.
THEY JUST WOULDN'T BELIEVE YOU.
ZERO OR DIE


...
I'M SERIOUS!

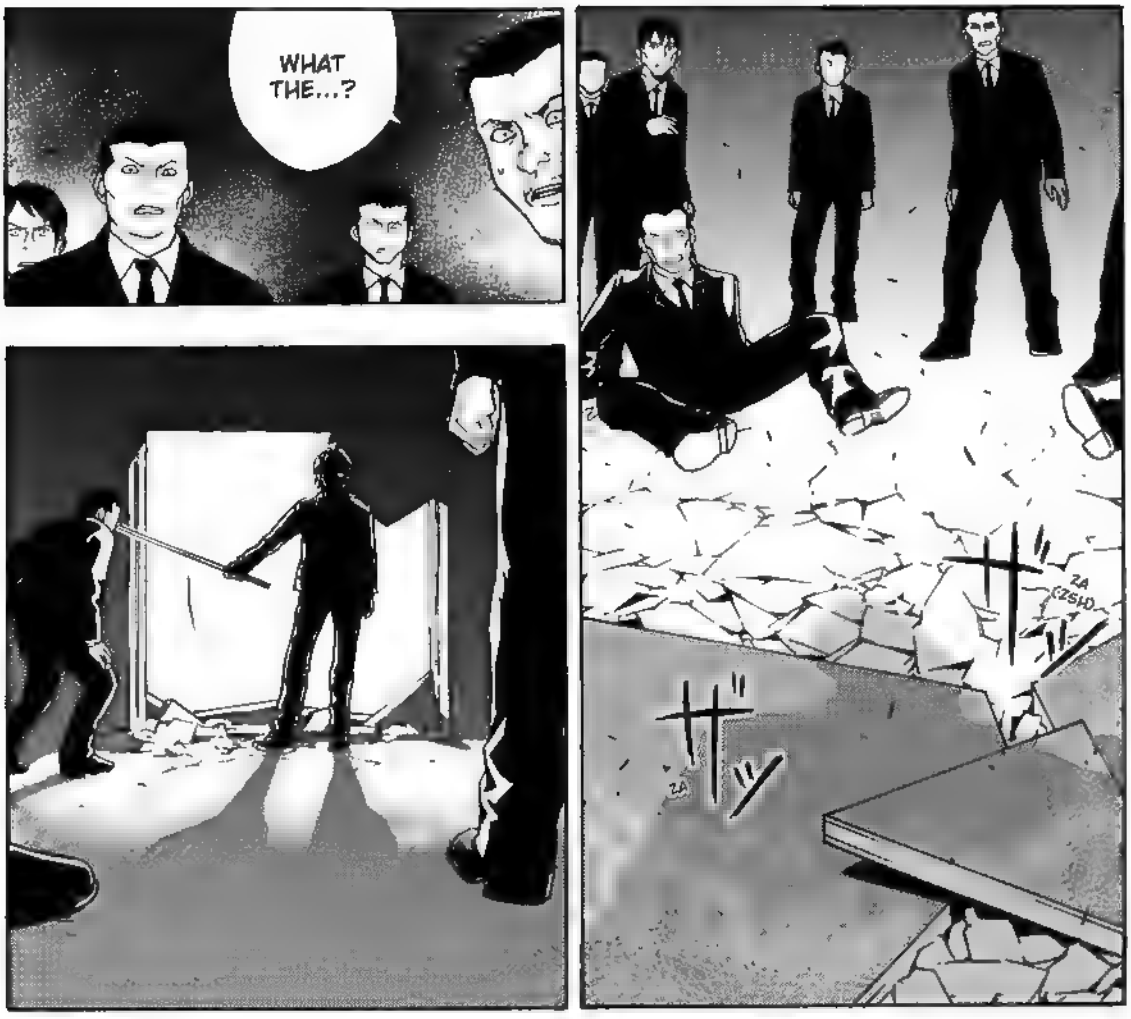

OUR FUNDING COMES FROM THE WEALTHY.
THE TECH COMES FROM SCIENTISTS.
AND OUR INTEL WE GET FROM CITIZENS.


KIIN
(KANG)
KIN

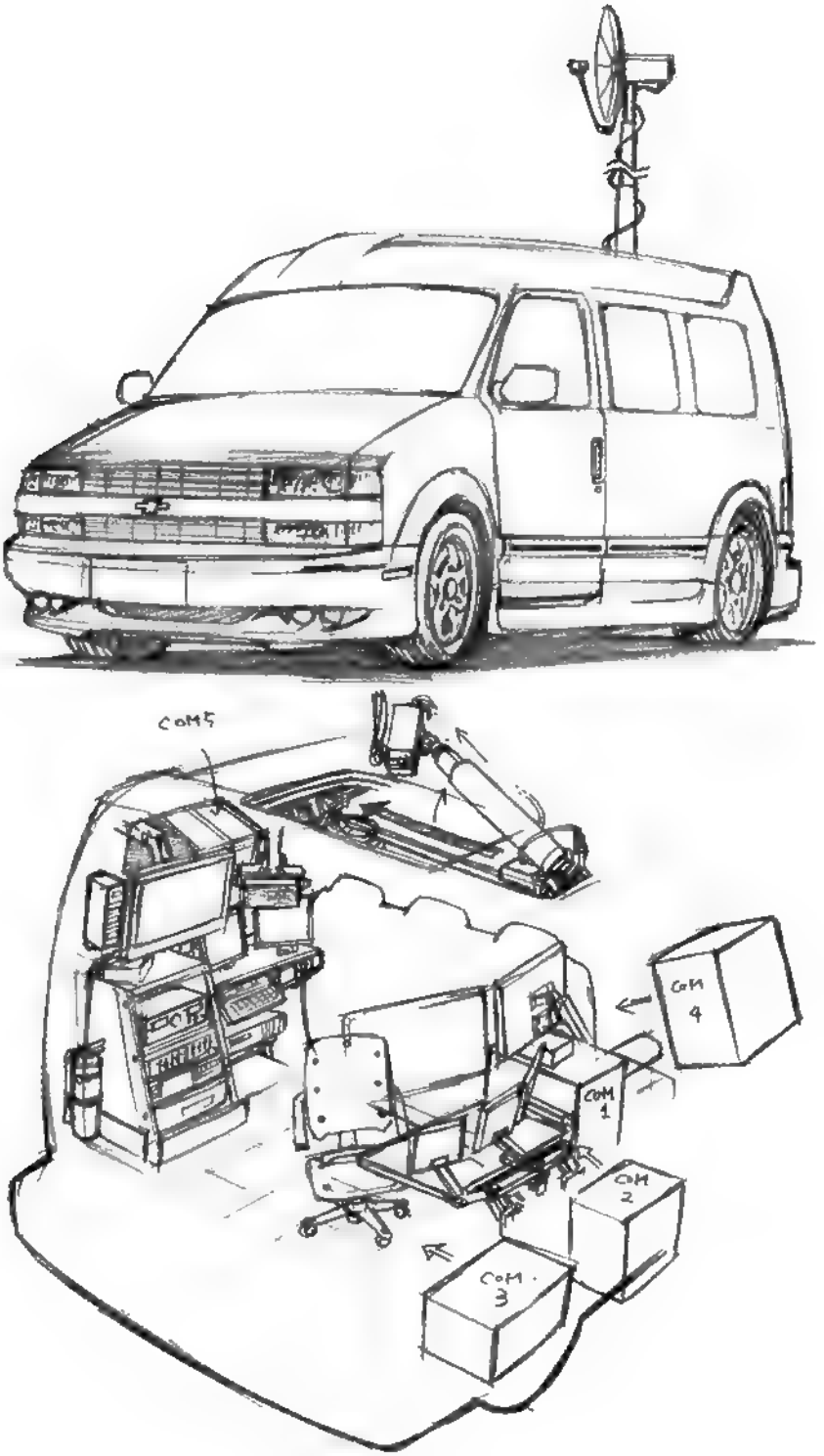
DOGA
(KABOOM)
AAAH!

!?

WHAT WAS THAT?
?


WHAT THE...?
ZA (ZSH)...
ZA
TON (TAP)

THIS IS A RAID, BOYS.


COM5
COM 4
COM 1
COM 2
COM 3

Until
Death
do us
Part

I DON'T KNOW WHO FIRST CAME UP WITH THE IDEA, NOT THAT IT REALLY MATTERS.
LET'S SAY THAT "HE"— OR "SHE," AS THE CASE MAY HAVE BEEN— LOST A LOVED ONE TO A CRIMINAL ACT.
AND THIS PERSON WONDERED, WHAT SHOULD I DO NOW?

SPEND THE REST OF MY LIFE IN MISERY, CURSING THE ONE WHO DID IT? OR LET IT GO AND HOPE THAT TIME WILL MAKE ME FORGET?
BUT A CRIMINAL CAN KILL A PERSON AND WALK FREE IN SEVEN OR EIGHT YEARS.
A MAJORITY OF CRIMINALS ARE ABLE TO LIVE THE REST OF THEIR LIVES IN RELATIVE COMFORT, WHILE THE VICTIM'S FAMILY IS MISERABLE FOREVER.
THIS CANNOT BE ALLOWED TO HAPPEN.

SO OTHER VICTIMS IN THE SAME POSITION CAME TOGETHER TO FORMULATE A PLAN.
SOME OF THEM WERE CHILDREN OR ELDERLY, POWERLESS TO TAKE MATTERS INTO THEIR OWN HANDS.
WHAT COULD SUCH A GROUP DO?
A CONSENSUS WAS REACHED.
THEY CHOSE TO FIGHT.

IT WAS THE START OF A VIGILANTE GROUP OF SORTS CALLED THE "ELEMENT NETWORK."

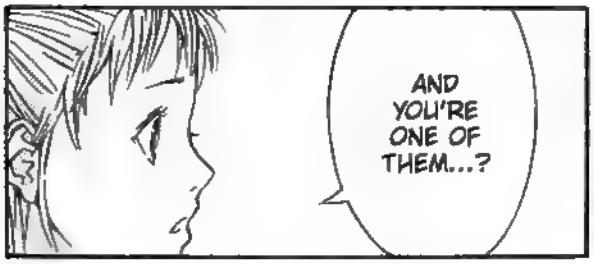
chapter 4

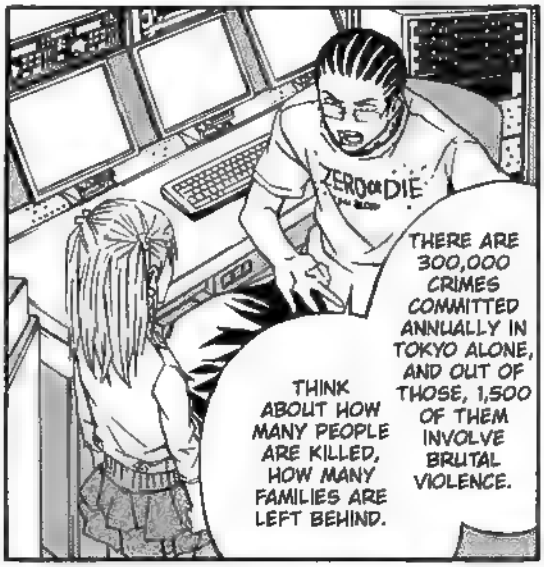
IT WAS THE START OF A VIGILANTE GROUP OF SORTS CALLED THE "ELEMENT NETWORK."

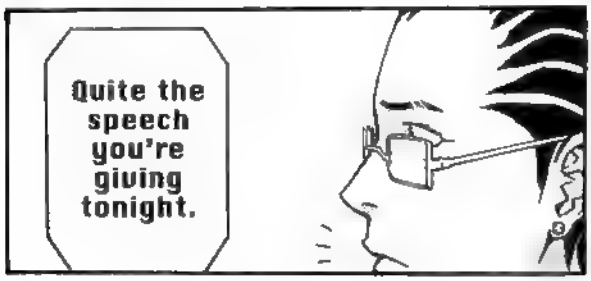
chapter 4

IT'S A SYSTEM WHERE EVERYONE CAN FIGHT CRIME IN SOME WAY.
DOGO (CRUNCH)
HUH?? WHA—?
EVERY-ONE CAN CONTRIBUTE SOMETHING, EVEN IF INDIRECTLY.
AND SO THE ORGANIZATION WAS FORMED TO RETURN HOPE AND MEANING TO THE VICTIMS' LIVES.
DOSA (THUD)

HOW MANY NEW VICTIMS ARE BORN INTO THIS COUNTRY EACH YEAR?
ZERO OR DIE


AND YOU'RE ONE OF THEM...?


ZERO OR DIE
THERE ARE 300,000 CRIMES COMMITTED ANNUALLY IN TOKYO ALONE, AND OUT OF THOSE, 1,500 OF THEM INVOLVE BRUTAL VIOLENCE.
THINK ABOUT HOW MANY PEOPLE ARE KILLED, HOW MANY FAMILIES ARE LEFT BEHIND.


Quite the speech you're giving tonight.

...BUT I'M THE ONE WHO DECIDES WHAT I DO WITH THEM.
YOU'RE FREE TO BELIEVE THAT...
H-hey!

KILLING THEM ISN'T THE POINT.
L-LOOK, ALL I'M SAYING IS, WE WANT TO PUT THE BAD GUYS THROUGH HELL TOO.

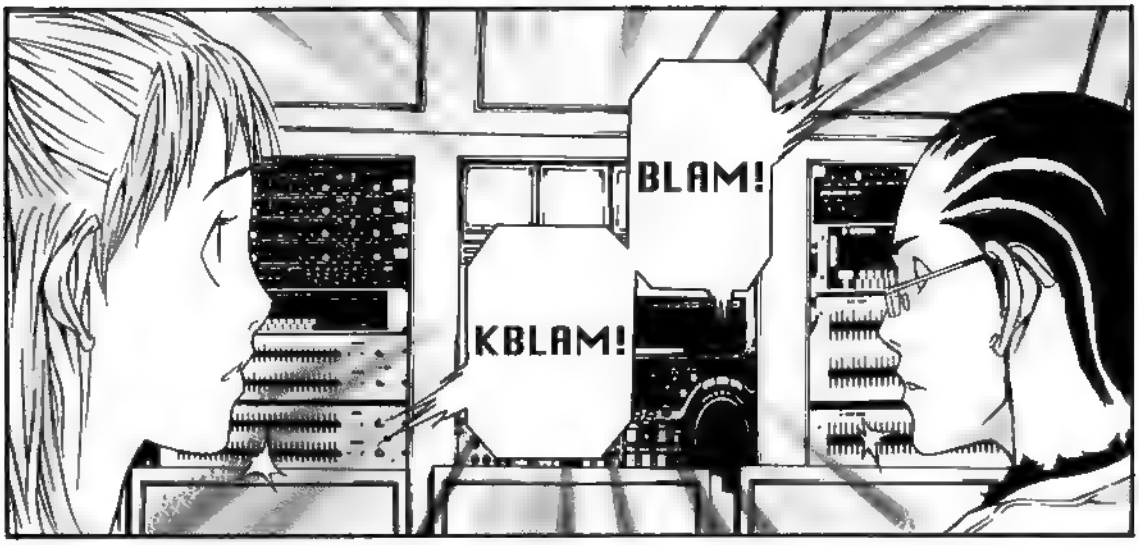
GREAT...
ALREADY GOT IT ALL CALCULATED OUT, DO YA...?
NOT MANY PEOPLE HERE TONIGHT. MUST BE BECAUSE THEY'VE GOT SO MANY MEN SCOURING THE CITY.
SHOULDN'T TAKE TOO LONG.
-BEEP-
MMM?
THE BIG SHOT'S OFFICE...
...SHOULD BE UP ON THE FIFTH FLOOR.
LOOKS LIKE IT WON'T BE THAT SIMPLE...

What's wrong?
HMM...
...IT'S HARDER FOR THESE "EYES" TO JUDGE THIS KIND OF THING THAN HUMAN ADVERSARIES.
IT'S JUST A SIMPLISTIC GRENADE TRAP.
THE PROBLEM IS...
NOPE, OUT OF THE QUESTION.
CAN'T YOU GET IT TO DISPLAY MORE DETAIL?
...THERE'S A WIRE, HUH...?
IT DOESN'T HAVE ENOUGH OF A PRESENCE FOR YOU TO SENSE IT YOURSELF, AND IT'S TOO THIN FOR THE SENSORS TO PICK UP.
.....

EVERY MICRO-SECOND SPENT ANALYZING AND MODELING THAT DATA TO PROVIDE VISUALS IS TIME HE CAN'T USE TO REACT.
IT COSTS A RIDICULOUS AMOUNT OF DATA TO GET HIGH-QUALITY VISUALS, AND IT ULTIMATELY BECOMES MORE "NOISE" FOR MAMORU TO PROCESS.
IT'S PRACTICALLY A COUP THAT WE GET THE LEVEL OF MODELING THAT WE DO NOW!
THIS IS A THREE-DIMENSIONAL MODEL BASED ON ULTRASONIC REVERBERATIONS.

...MY POINT IS, I BUSTED MY ASS TO CREATE THIS SYSTEM, SO DON'T KNOCK IT.
SHEESH.

RAISING THE CAPABILITIES OF OUR CHIPS WILL MAYBE GET YOU BETTER IRREGULARITY DETAILS, BUT THAT'S IT.
YOU MIGHT EVENTUALLY BE ABLE TO SEE SOME-THING LIKE A TINY WIRE, BUT...


BLAM!
KBLAM!

ZUGYUN (KABUSSHO)
ZUGYUN
KIN
KIN (TING)
NNH!

SUPA (SNICK)

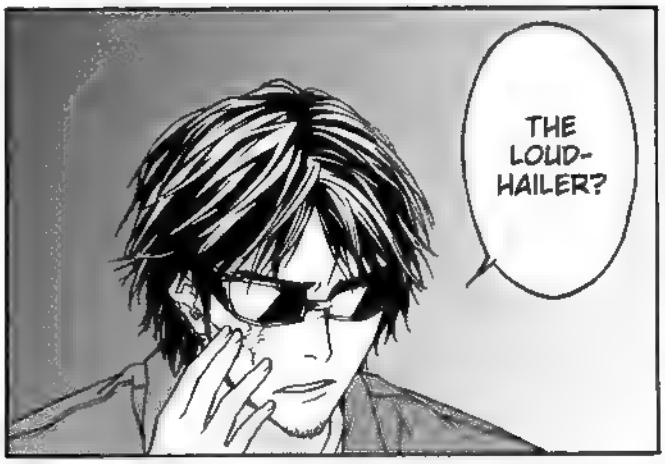
PIIN (FLICK)
!!

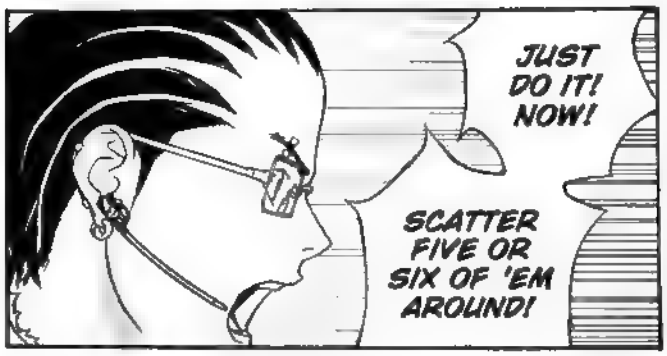
BI
BI
HYUN
(SWISH)
BI
(BING)
BI
BI
HYUN

.....

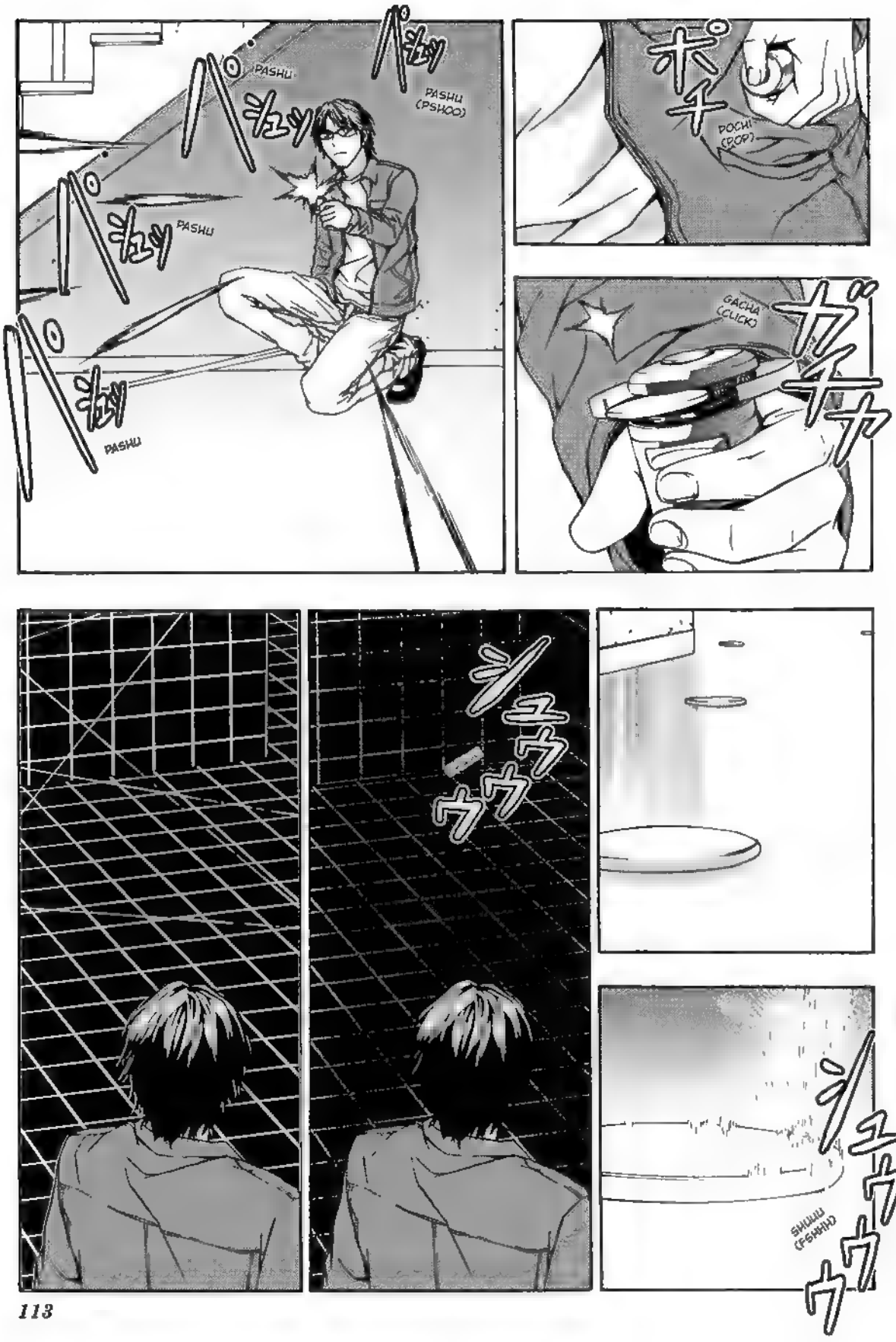
AND IF YOU TWO KNEW HOW TO FIRE A FUCKING GUN, HE'D BE DEAD RIGHT NOW.
BUT IT LOOKS LIKE THE REPORTS WERE TRUE. HE REALLY CAN'T SEE.
TCH. LUCKY BASTARD MANAGED NOT TO GET TANGLED UP.
...S-SORRY, SIR...
...DON'T LET THIS BULLSHIT DRAG OUT. HE'S ON THE DEFENSIVE NOW, SO KEEP THE PRESSURE ON.
...AT ANY RATE...
YES, SIR.
IF WE HAD ONE MORE PINEAPPLE DOWN THERE, HE'DA BEEN BLOWN TO BITS TOO...
...BUT THE OLD MAN IS CHEAP LIKE THAT.

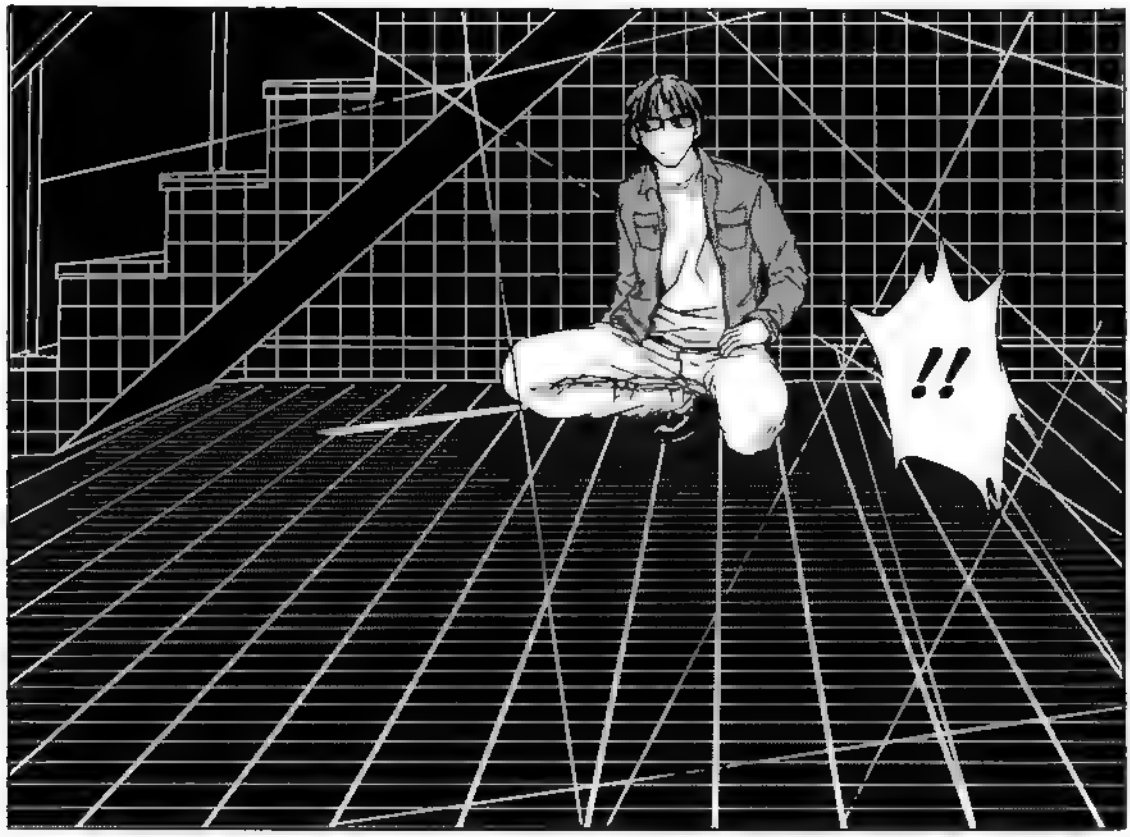
OF COURSE ...
...IF HE WAS JUST A BIT BETTER AT WHAT HE DOES, WE'D REALLY HAVE SOMETHING INTERESTING ON OUR HANDS. SHAME...


THE LOUD-HAILER?


JUST DO IT! NOW!
SCATTER FIVE OR SIX OF 'EM AROUND!

Bust out the "loud-hailer."


PASHU
PASHU
PASHU
PASHU
PASHU (PSHOO)
POCHI (POP)
GACHA (CLICK)
シュウウウ
SHUUU (FSHHH)
シュウウウ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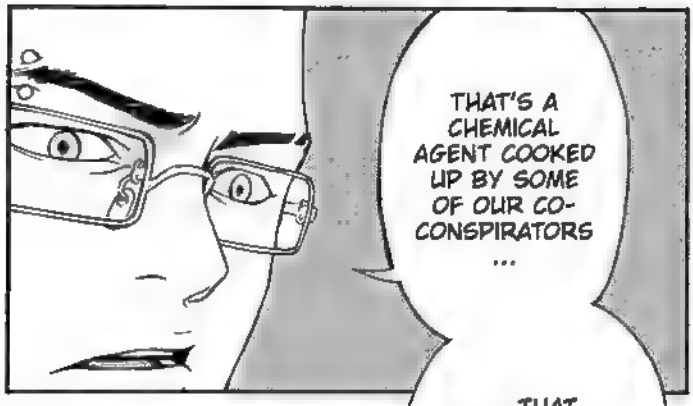
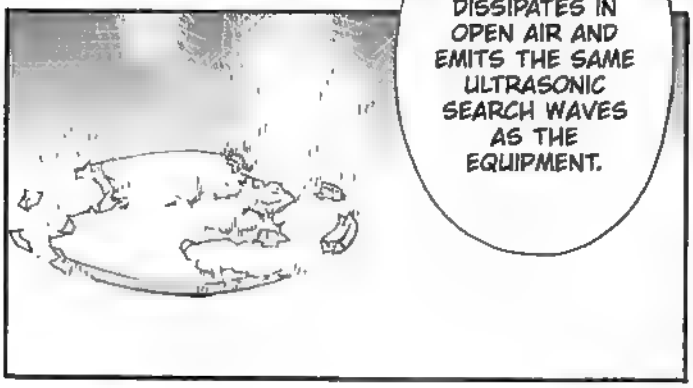
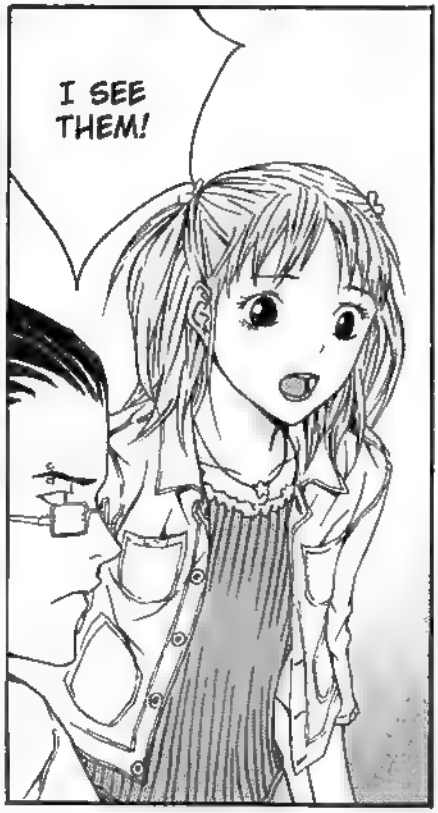
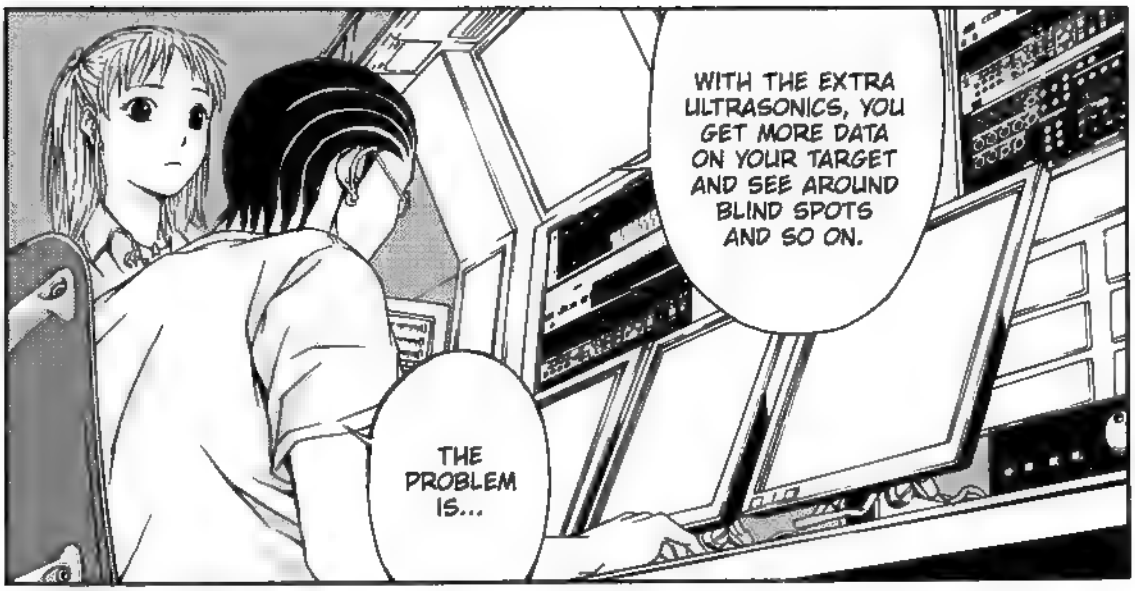
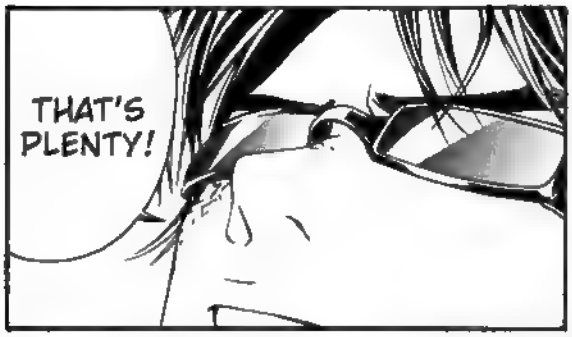
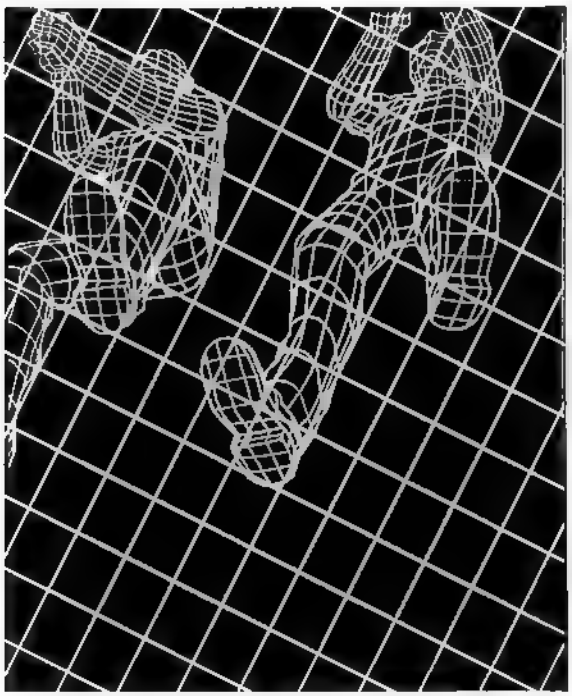

THAT'S A CHEMICAL AGENT COOKED UP BY SOME OF OUR CO-CONSPIRATORS ...


...THAT DISSIPATES IN OPEN AIR AND EMITS THE SAME ULTRASONIC SEARCH WAVES AS THE EQUIPMENT.


I SEE THEM!


WITH THE EXTRA ULTRASONICS, YOU GET MORE DATA ON YOUR TARGET AND SEE AROUND BLIND SPOTS AND SO ON.
THE PROBLEM IS...


THAT'S PLENTY!



...it'll only work for five minutes!
Su (SWF)

DOSU (THUNK)
OVER HERE, CHUMP!
OH SHIT...
AAGH !!

ZUGYUN (BLAM)
DOGA (SLAM)

AAAH!
DOSU (SLAM)
GASHI (GRAB)
LET GO'A ME!!
GA (KICK)
.....
I NEED TO ASK YOUR BOSS SOMETHING.

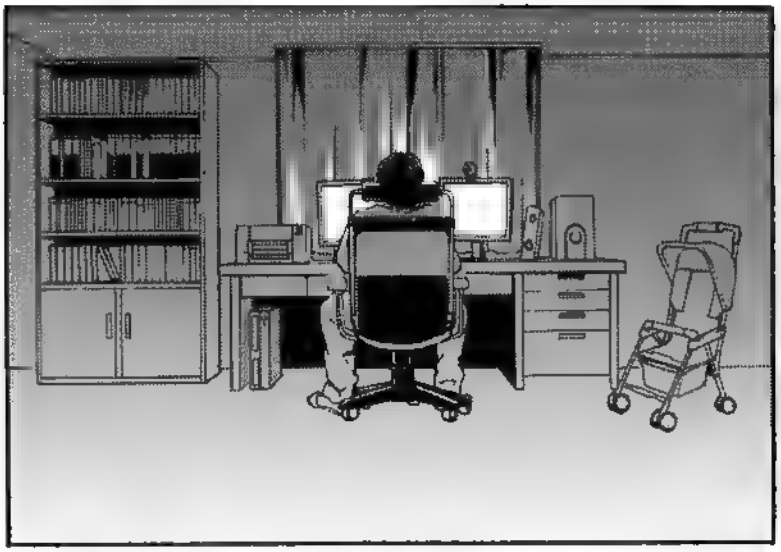
ZA (ZSHH)
AAAH!
RRRH...
F-FUCKIN' MONSTER...
I KNOW HE'S HERE. DON'T TEST MY PATIENCE.
IF YOU'RE REAL YAKUZA, THEN YOU OUGHTA KNOW...
...HOW PAINFUL IT IS TO HAVE YOUR FINGERS SEVERED ONE BY ONE.

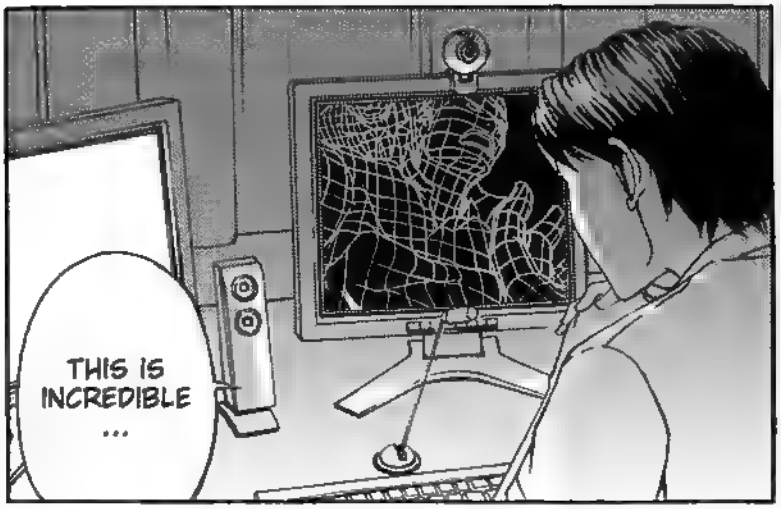
HE'S TAKEN OUT OVER A DOZEN MEN, BUT ONLY ONE OF 'EM ACTUALLY GOT SLASHED.
THE SCOUTING REPORT TOLD US AS MUCH...
DAAAMN...
HE'S TEARING THOSE GUYS UP...
!
...BUT STILL...I'M GLAD HE'S ON OUR SIDE.
AAAGH !!

IT'S ONLY BEEN A FEW HOURS AT MOST...
PIPIN
AAH!
DOGADA (THWUMP)
SUPA (SNICK)
GAAH !!
PI (PING)
NO!
PIPIN

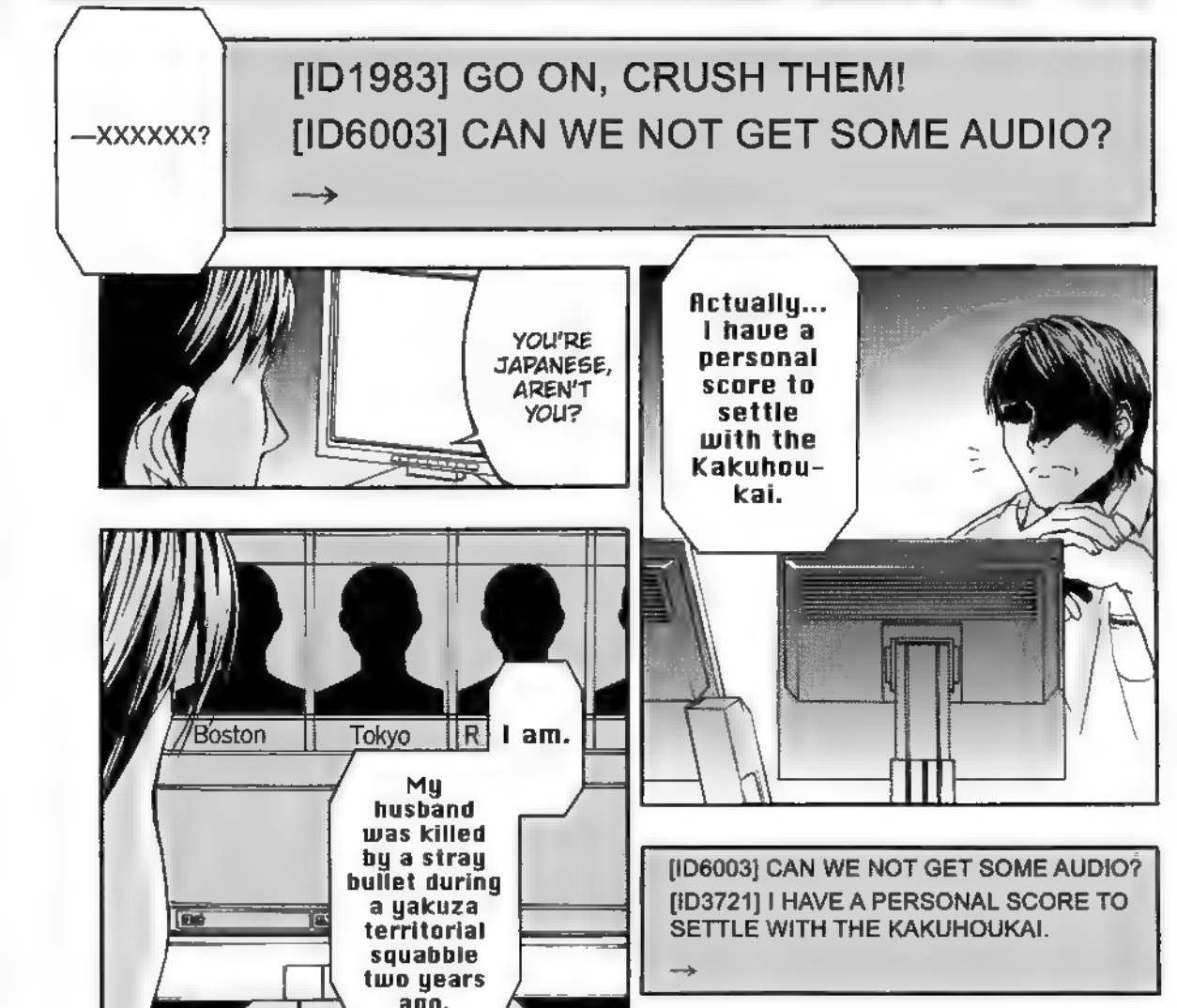
...BUT IT'S CLEAR THAT HE'S LEGITIMATELY ANGRY FOR HER SAKE...
HE MAY BE PRICKLY... BUT HE AIN'T SO BAD, I GUESS.

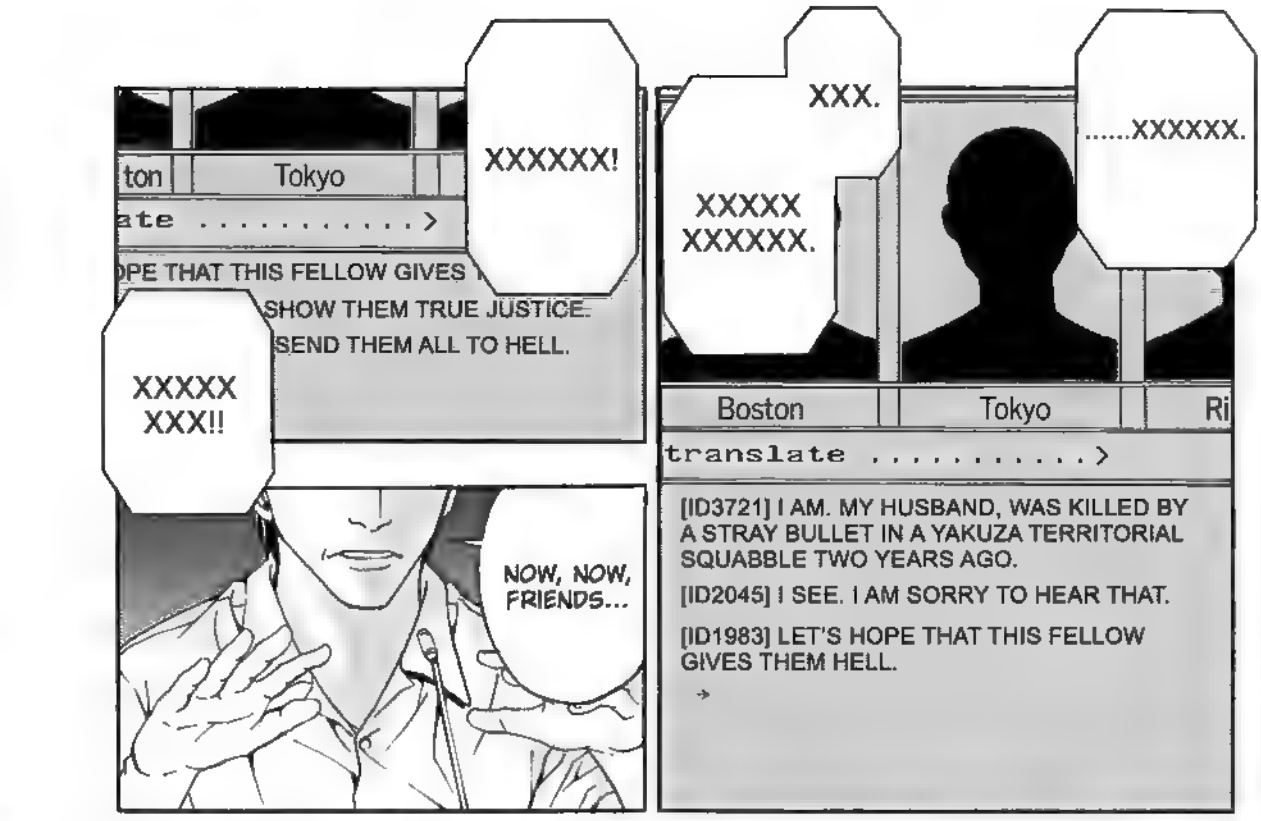
chapter 5




THIS IS INCREDIBLE ...

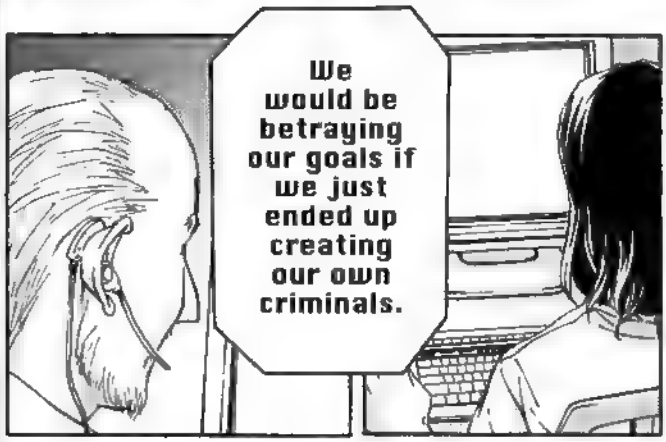
London
Canberra
New Yo
Boston
Tokyo
Rio
translate .....>
[ID1568] THIS IS INCREDIBLE...
[ID2045] IT IS RECKLESS TO ASSAULT ON THE ... IMMEDIATELY. THIS TRANSLATION IS NOT SO GOOD.
→
<I gotta say, this translation software kinda sucks.>
좋았어!! 해치워버려!!
<He's pretty reckless, raiding that mobster stronghold right away.>

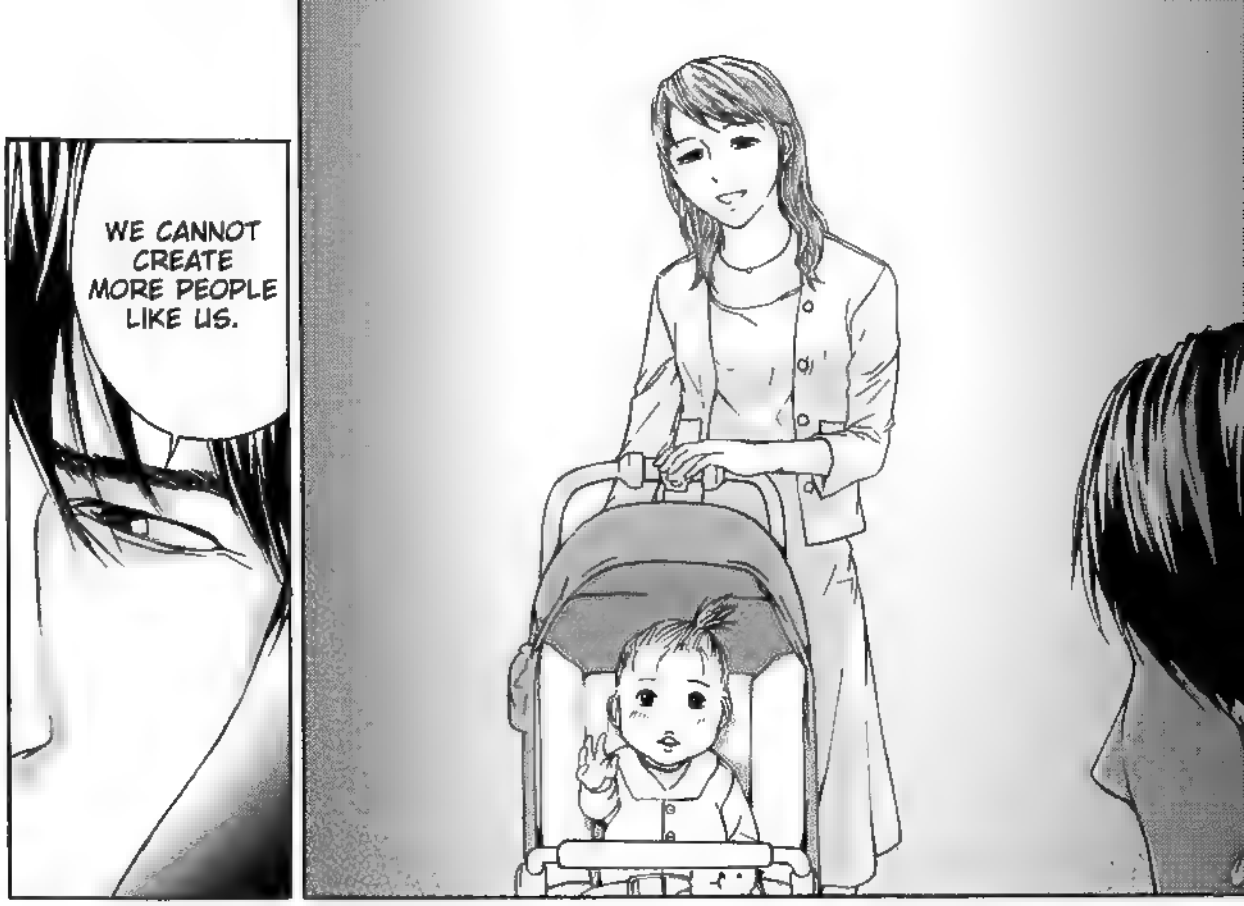

—XXXXXX?
[ID1983] GO ON, CRUSH THEM!
[ID6003] CAN WE NOT GET SOME AUDIO?
→
YOU'RE JAPANESE, AREN'T YOU?
Actually... I have a personal score to settle with the Kakuhou-kai.
Boston
Tokyo
R
I am.
My husband was killed by a stray bullet during a yakuza territorial squabble two years ago.
[ID6003] CAN WE NOT GET SOME AUDIO?
[ID3721] I HAVE A PERSONAL SCORE TO SETTLE WITH THE KAKUHOUKAI.
→


XXXXXX!
ton
Tokyo
ate .....>
OPE THAT THIS FELLOW GIVES
SHOW THEM TRUE JUSTICE.
SEND THEM ALL TO HELL.
XXXXX XXX!!
NOW, NOW, FRIENDS...
XXX.
XXXXX XXXXXX.
.....XXXXXX.
Boston
Tokyo
Ri
translate .....>
[ID3721] I AM. MY HUSBAND, WAS KILLED BY A STRAY BULLET IN A YAKUZA TERRITORIAL SQUABBLE TWO YEARS AGO.
[ID2045] I SEE. I AM SORRY TO HEAR THAT.
[ID1983] LET'S HOPE THAT THIS FELLOW GIVES THEM HELL.

NO MORE...

BUT OUR JOB IS TO OBSERVE OUR AGENT TO MAKE SURE THAT HE DOES NOT RUN OUT OF CONTROL.
YOUR ANGER IS WELL JUSTIFIED.


We would be betraying our goals if we just ended up creating our own criminals.

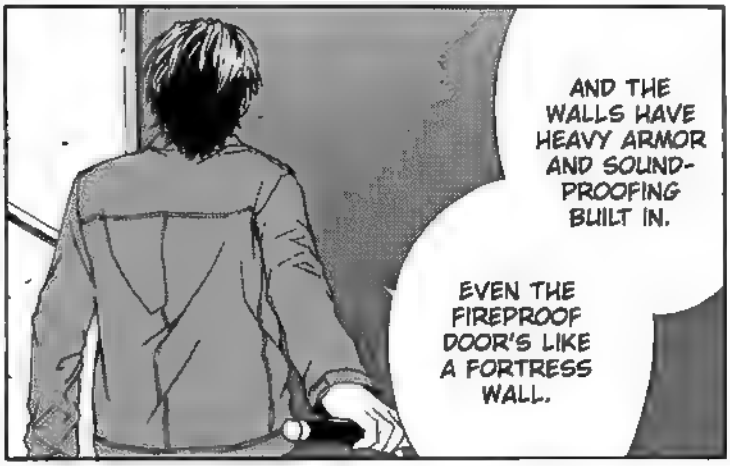


[ID1568] NO MORE.
[ID1568] WE CANNOT CREATE MORE PEOPLE LIKE US.
→

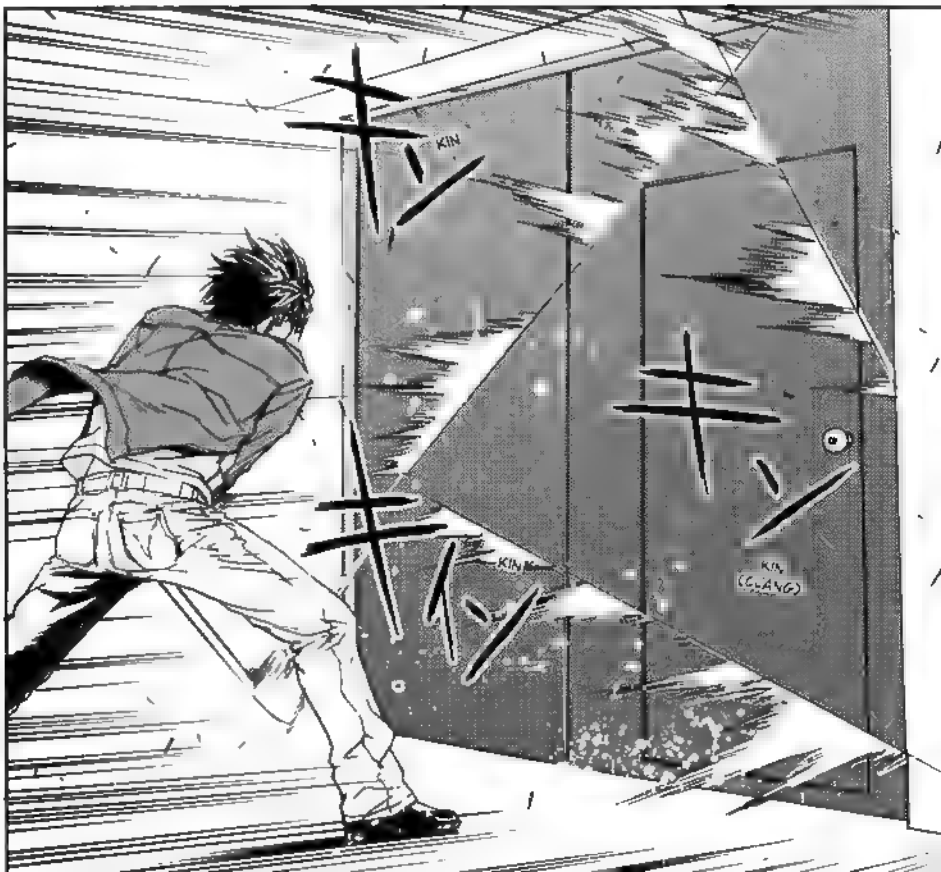
5
4
EXIT
.....
HERE WE GO...
KAN CLANG
カン
カン
KAN

ALL THESE DOORS ARE STEEL-PLATED FOR DEFENSE.

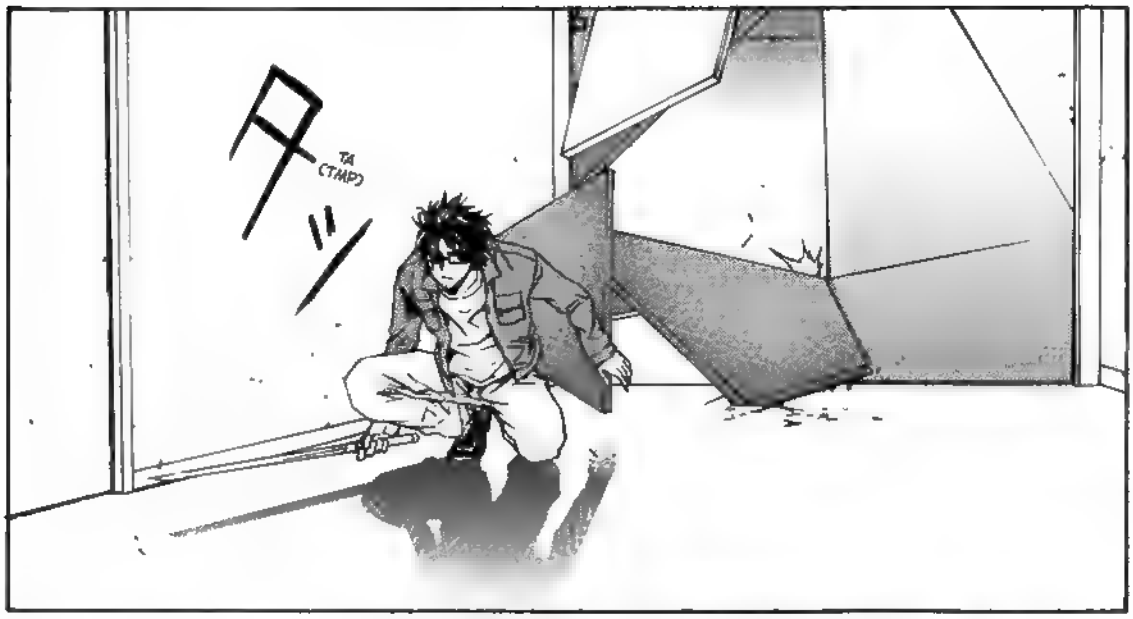
IT LOOKS LIKE THAT'S A FIREPROOF DOOR.
I know, Igawa.


AND THE WALLS HAVE HEAVY ARMOR AND SOUND-PROOFING BUILT IN.
EVEN THE FIREPROOF DOOR'S LIKE A FORTRESS WALL.

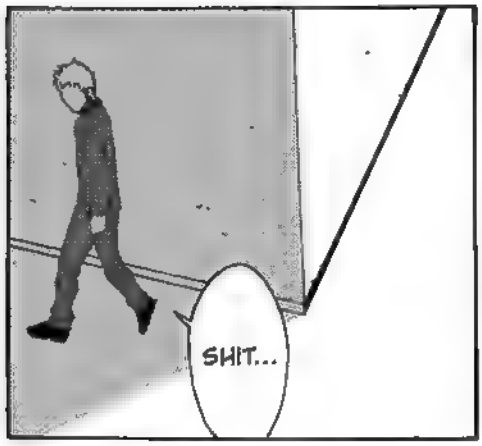
DOGA (STOMP)


KIN
KIN
KIN (CLANG)

!!
ZUGYUN
ZUGYUN (KABLAM)
ZUGYUN
GOTO (THUNK)
KON (TUNK)
SHUUUU (FSHH)
PASHU (PSHT)
PASHU
TRYING TO KEEP ME PINNED TO MAKE IT EASIER TO HIT ME, HUH?
KACHA (CLICK)
NOT A BAD TACTIC.


TA (TMP)

I CAN'T KEEP UP WITH HIM WITH JUST A SINGLE HANDGUN.
GACHA (CLICK)
HE AIN'T GOIN' DOWN EASY.


SHIT...

TCH...
BASTARD'S CAUTIOUS...

Titans coming up to bat in the bottom of the ninth.
And they've got the right man leading off, with three hits already tonight...
SUPA (SNIK)
HUH?
ポロ
PORO (PLOP)
KII (CREAK)
...YOU GET IT ALL CLEANED UP, KOMURA ...?

HUHHH?
GATAN (THWUMP)

GWAAAH !!
DOSA (THUMP)

WHO...
WHO THE FUCK ARE YOU!?

AAAH
!!
GASHU
(GSHUT)

NIYA
(SMIRK)

DODO
(THWUMP)
AAAH!!

WHERE THE HELL IS EVERY-ONE!?
KOMURA!
MIYATA!

WHERE ARE YOU?
INOUE! SADA!
ALL WIPED OUT.
.....
AAAAH !!
HOW DOES A GUY WHO CALLS HIMSELF A FIGHTER NOT KEEP A SINGLE WEAPON AROUND?
WELL, LET THAT BE A LESSON.
LIKE WE DON'T KNOW HOW TO HIDE THAT SHIT FROM THE FUZZ.
CAN'T BEAT A MONSTER LIKE HIM IN A FACE-OFF.
I'LL FIND A WAY TO AVENGE YOUR DEATH, POPS.
STINGY BASTARD!
WHAT'S THE POINT OF HAVING MILITARY TRAINING...
...IF HE'S NOT GONNA BUY A SINGLE ROCKET LAUNCHER?

YOU BAS-TARD!
S-STAY BACK ...
AAAAH!
DIE!!
ZUGYUN (KABLAM)
YOU...!
Y-YOU'RE IN FOR IT NOW!!
.....

SUU (SSK)
KIN (CLINK)
HUH?
KATSUN (THOK)
KATSU
SHIT!
ZUGYUN
ZUGYUN
ZUGYUN

ガ
GA
(THWIP)
ガ
GA
ガ
GA
GA
ガ
GA
ガ

...THE BULLETS?
HUH?
THAT SWORD ...?
NO... HOW —?
BARA
BARA
BARA
BARA (CLUNK)
ZUBA (SLICE)
YOU GOTTA BE SHITTIN' ME...
ポロ
PORO (DROP)

HYAAH!
ZU (SHOVE)
HE'S BEEN SHOT AT QUITE A BIT TONIGHT.
PROBABLY GOT PLENTY OF GOOD DATA FOR THAT BULLET TRAJECTORY DETECTION SOFTWARE.
THANK YOU.
GAAH!
COURSE ...
...YOU CAN'T DO STUFF LIKE THIS WITHOUT SOME SERIOUS STONES.

What the hell are you—
AUDIO MUTE.
HE JUST KILLED THE SOUND.
DAMN...
?
WHAT HAPPENED ?
.....
HUH ?
HEY!
BUT HE STILL KNOWS THAT EVERYTHING IS BEING RECORDED.
WHAT'S HE UP TO?
...

What's going on!?
.....
Dude!
DOGA (SLAM)
ALL I WANT TO HEAR OUT OF YOU IS ANSWERS!
...WHAT DO YOU WANT WITH THE GIRL...?
HUH !?
GA (GRAB)
WHAT ?
S-SERIOUSLY? IS THAT WHY YOU RAIDED US!?
ACK —!
BUT EVEN IF THAT WAS THE CASE, YOU COULDN'T HAVE NARROWED IT DOWN ON YOUR OWN.
THERE'S SOMEONE ELSE PULLING THE STRINGS.
.....
.....
YOU WANTED HER POWERS, DIDN'T YOU?
LET ME GUESS. YOU NOTICED SHE WAS WINNING BIG LOTTERY JACKPOTS ONE AFTER THE OTHER AND STARTED TO TAKE AN INTEREST?

.....
I-IT'S EX SOLID!
THEY CON-TRACTED US!!
DOGA (SLAM)
TALK!
AAGH!

I'M SURE YOU THOUGHT YOU WERE DELAYING THE NEWS GETTING OUT...
...BUT KILLING HER PARENTS WAS THE WORST CHOICE YOU COULD POSSIBLY HAVE MADE...
DAMN! WE'RE NOT OUT OF THE WOODS YET, THEN.

POI (TOSS)
ポイ
DOSASA (SLAM)
AAAH!

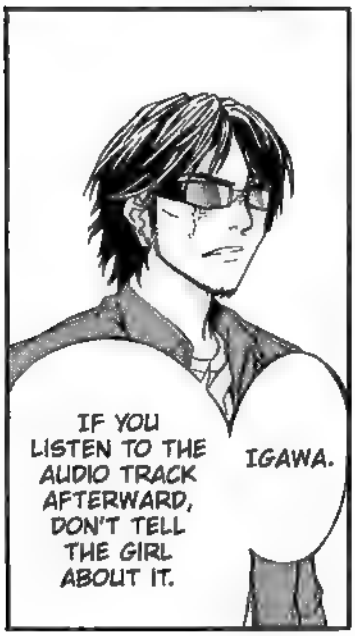
WHAT!?
NEXT TIME IT HAPPENS, YOU'RE DONE!!
YOU'RE OLD HANDS AT THIS STUFF... I EXPECT YOU'VE ELIMINATED ALL THE EVIDENCE.
BUT NOW THAT I'M INVOLVED, THERE'LL BE NO MORE OF THIS BULLSHIT!

...FLAYED WITHIN AN INCH OF THEI—
Y-YOU THINK YOU'RE GONNA GET AWAY WITH THIS!? I'LL HAVE EVERY RELATIVE, EVERY PERSON YOU KNOW...

?
WHAT DID YOU...
PI (SPURT)
SHU (SNIK)
SHU
PUSHU (SSSHT)
!!

I'VE CUT THE TENDONS IN BOTH OF YOUR ARMS.
YOU COULD PROBABLY HAVE THEM REATTACHED, BUT YOU'LL NEVER GET YOUR OLD GRIP BACK.
YOU WON'T SHOOT A GUN AGAIN.
AAH! OH GOD, OH GOD!
AAA-AAA-AGH!
...NEXT TIME, I'M TAKING YOUR LEGS...
UNTIL YOU'RE SICK OF THE SIGHT OF ME!
AS MANY TIMES AS I SEE YOUR EVIL DEEDS, I'LL COME FOR YOU.

ZOKU (SHIVER)
.....
KAH-HA-HA-HA-HA-HA!
USING YOUR METHODS.


IF YOU LISTEN TO THE AUDIO TRACK AFTERWARD, DON'T TELL THE GIRL ABOUT IT.
IGAWA.

KON (THUNK)

HA-HA-HA-HA...
.....

THE LAST THING WE NEED IS MORE TEARS.
...
GACHA (CLICK)
.....
.....
?

chapter 6

YO, BUDDY.
O-OFFICER GENDA...!
WHAT ARE YOU UP TO, WALKING THE STREETS WITH THAT SCARY LOOK ON YOUR FACE?

MIGHTY DANGEROUS THING YOU HAVE TUCKED AWAY IN HERE.
SOMETHING TELLS ME YOU'RE UP TO SOME-THING...
...
N-NOTHING, SIR.
!!
OHH?
I'LL HEAR YOUR ENTIRE STORY...
ZUI (LOOM)
...BACK AT THE STATION.
AGH!
DON'T GET ANY FUNNY IDEAS.
!

GENDA-SAN!
WE GOT FOUR MORE OVER THERE!
DIDN'T ANY OF THEM GET AN ORDER TO RETURN TO BASE?
ODD...
IT'S JUST AROUND THE CORNER.
?
WHERE ARE YOU GOING, SIR?
HUH!?

ガチャ
GACHA (CLICK)
WHOA...
キー
KII! (SCREECH)

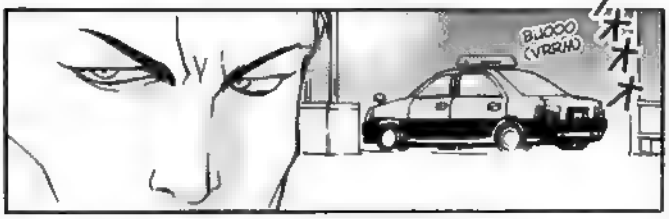
WHOA, PAL.
I WOULDN'T WALK IN ANY FARTHER IF I WERE YOU, OFFICER GENDA.
YOU THINK WARRANTS MATTER AT A TIME LIKE THIS, KOMURA!? WHAT HAPPENED !?
NOTHING AT ALL, SIR. NOTHING TO SEE HERE.
NOT WITHOUT A WARRANT.

NO, THERE'S SOMETHING BIGGER HAPPENING HERE, AND YOU'LL—
GA (STOMP)
...DON'T GIVE ME THAT SHIT.
YOU GOT YOUR YOUNG AGENTS WALKING THE STREETS ARMED TO THE TEETH WHILE YOUR HEADQUARTERS IS A SMOKING RUIN.
.....
LEAVE US TO HANDLE OUR OWN AFFAIRS!
NOTH-ING HAP-PENED HERE!

...ARE YOU SURE ABOUT THIS, SIR...?
AM I SURE? NO.
BUT WE CAN'T RAISE HELL HERE.

FINE, FINE.
IF YOU WANNA PLAY DUMB WITH US, WE KNOW HOW THAT GAME WORKS.

IF YOU ASK ME, IT SEEMS FAIRLY CLEAR...
AND NOT ONLY THAT...
...THAT OUR MYSTERY COMBATANT SHOWED UP HERE.


ブオオオ
BLOOOO (VRRM)

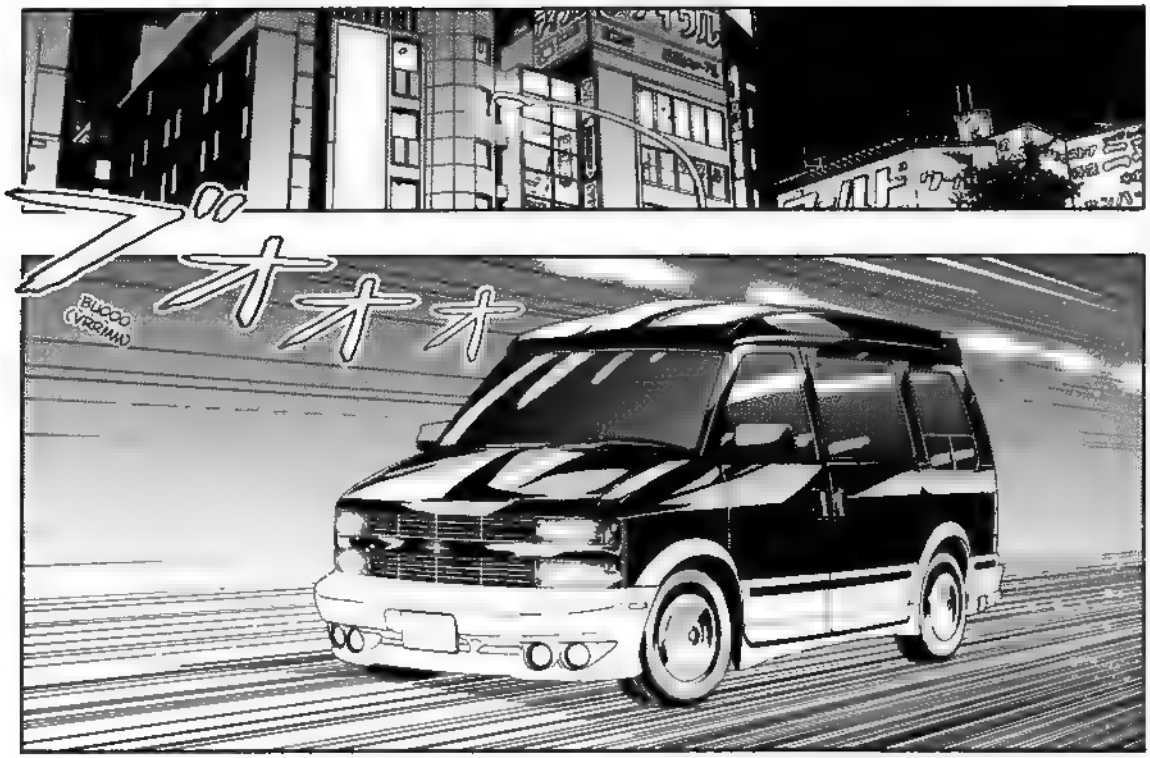
YOU THINK HE LED AN ALL-OUT ASSAULT ON KAKUHOU-KAI?
ガチャ
GACHA (CLICK)
.....

GET THIS SHIT CLEANED UP!!

THAT SHOULDN'T BE TOO HARD TO FIND OUT.

...THIS IS PATHETIC...
HOW ARE WE GOING TO REPORT WHAT HAPPENED WITH THE GIRL TO EX SOLID?
HOW'S THE OLD MAN DOING !?
HE'S AT THE USUAL HOSPITAL.
SOUNDS LIKE HE'S STABILIZING.
WHERE ARE THE BOYS OUT-SIDE!?
SORRY, BOSS.
OUR CELL PHONES DON'T WORK, AND WE CAN'T GET IN TOUCH WITH 'EM.
NOW THAT I'M CALLING THE SHOTS AROUND HERE...
...THIS GUY'S GOING TO PAY FOR WHAT HE'S DONE...ON MY TERMS.
KIKIKIK!!! (SCREECH)
SHE'S WITH THE GUY.
...HMPH...
THAT'S NOT AN ISSUE.

I WON'T LET YOU GET AWAY NEXT TIME!


ブオオオ
BUOOO (VROOM)

.....
MAMA...
.....
ZERO OR DIE
...PAPA...
...THAT A SWORD WAS SUCH AN OLD-FASHIONED CHOICE FOR A GUY WITH SUCH HIGH-TECH OUTFITTING...
I USED TO THINK...
STILL...
...THAT WAS A CLOSE CALL.
CAN'T AIM A GUN WITH THESE ROBOT EYES.
YOU GOTTA STICK TO WHAT YOU KNOW BEST.
...BUT TONIGHT CONVINCED ME.

GASHAN (CRASH)
I COULD'VE BEEN IN SOME SERIOUS TROUBLE IF SHE HADN'T CALLED OUT.
YEAH...
IT HAPPENED THE INSTANT IT WOULD'VE BEEN EASIEST TO CATCH ME OFF-GUARD.

!?

BUT TO MY EYES, THEY WERE "WALLS."

SHE SAID SOMETHING ABOUT "WALLS COMING DOWN," BUT THOSE WEREN'T WALLS.
IT SOUNDED LIKE PANES OF GLASS WHEN THEY HIT.

LET'S JUST WRITE THIS OFF AS A HUMANI-TARIAN RESCUE PLUS FIELD TEST.
IF WE CLAIM WE WERE JUST "SENDING A MESSAGE," IT SOUNDS LIKE A GIANT WASTE OF TIME.

.....
...HMM...

ZAZA (ZSHK)
Report of a burglary at the Sawadas', Lot 11.
BEEP
Car #23...
NOT QUITE.
LISTEN TO THE POLICE SCANNER.
HUH!?
BUT THE INCIDENT DOESN'T NEED TO GO PUBLIC FOR THE RUMORS OF ME TO SPREAD.
...WHAT DO YOU ...?
NO MENTIONS OF THAT HUGE RAMPAGE?
I FIGURED IT WOULD BE ALL OVER THE PLACE BY NOW.
YOU THINK A MUSCLE-HEAVY GROUP LIKE KAKUHOUKAI WANTS WORD TO GET OUT THAT THEY WERE CAUGHT WITH THEIR PANTS DOWN BY ONE DUDE?

THE RUMORS OF THE CREEPY, SWORD-SWINGING MANIAC.

I JUST WANT TO DEDICATE THOSE TRAITS TO OUR WORK FROM NOW ON.

...RIGHT ALONG-SIDE THAT IDIOTIC STRENGTH ...
...YOU HAVE A WICKED BRAIN FOR TACTICS...

THE NEXT DAY
SIGN: WEST KANTO UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY
西関東工科大学
...BUT I CAN'T IMAGINE THAT SUCH A THING ACTUALLY EXISTS...
GASA (RUSTLE)
ガサ
102-2
102-3

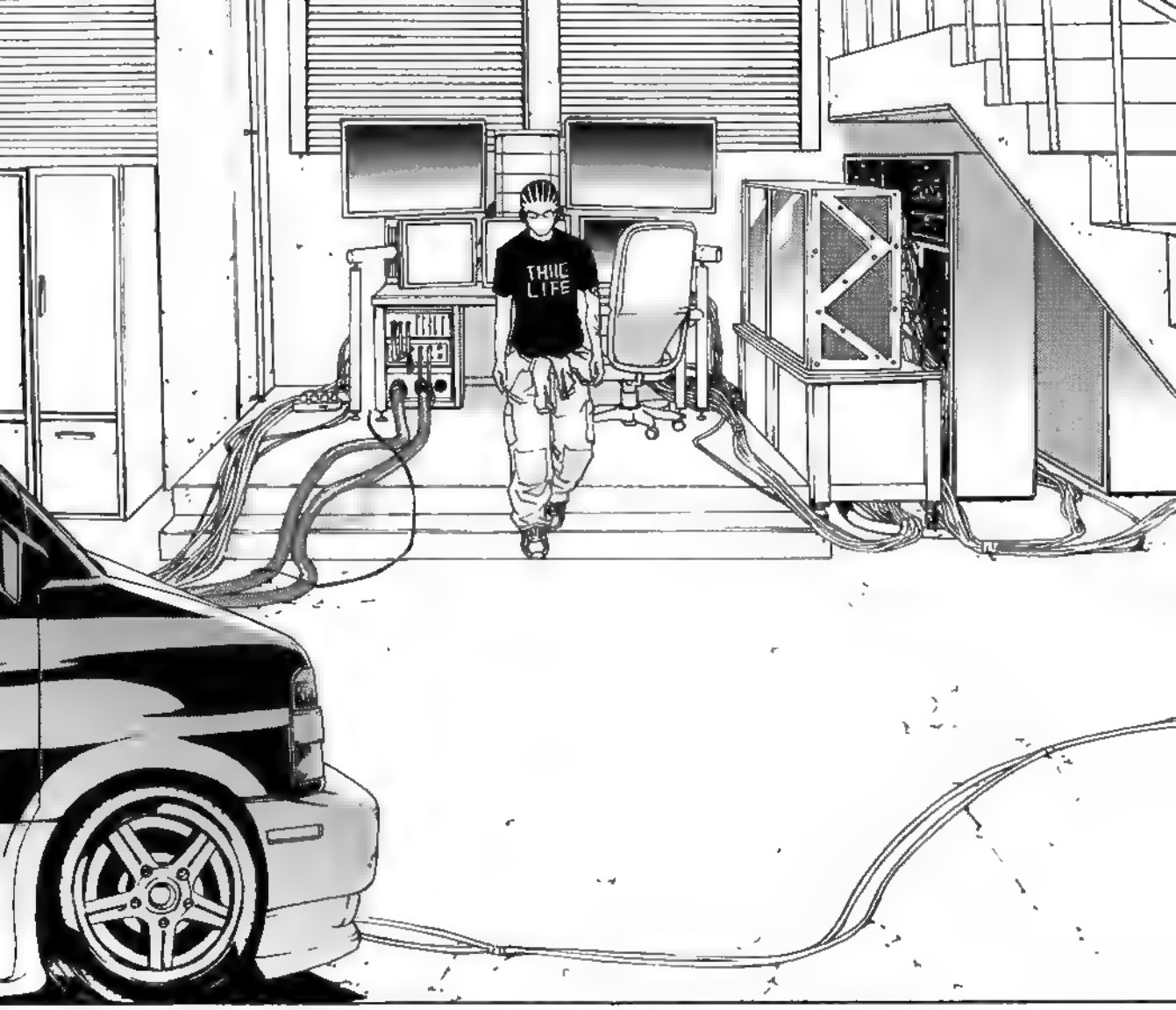
...A... MONO-LAYER? SIR?
YES, THEORETICALLY. I'M ONLY SPEAKING IN THEORETICAL TERMS.
THOUGH IF IT DID EXIST...
...IT WOULD HAVE TO UTILIZE A MONOLAYER.
HUH ...?
...
BUT AS I SAID, THAT'S ONLY THEO-RETICAL.
...IT COULD BREAK DOWN THE BONDS OF ANY TYPE OF MOLECULE IT CAME INTO CONTACT WITH.
...AND IT WAS USED LIKE AN INCREDIBLY THIN BLADE...
WHAT I MEAN IS THAT IF THERE WERE A MATERIAL ONLY THE THICKNESS OF A SINGLE MOLECULE...

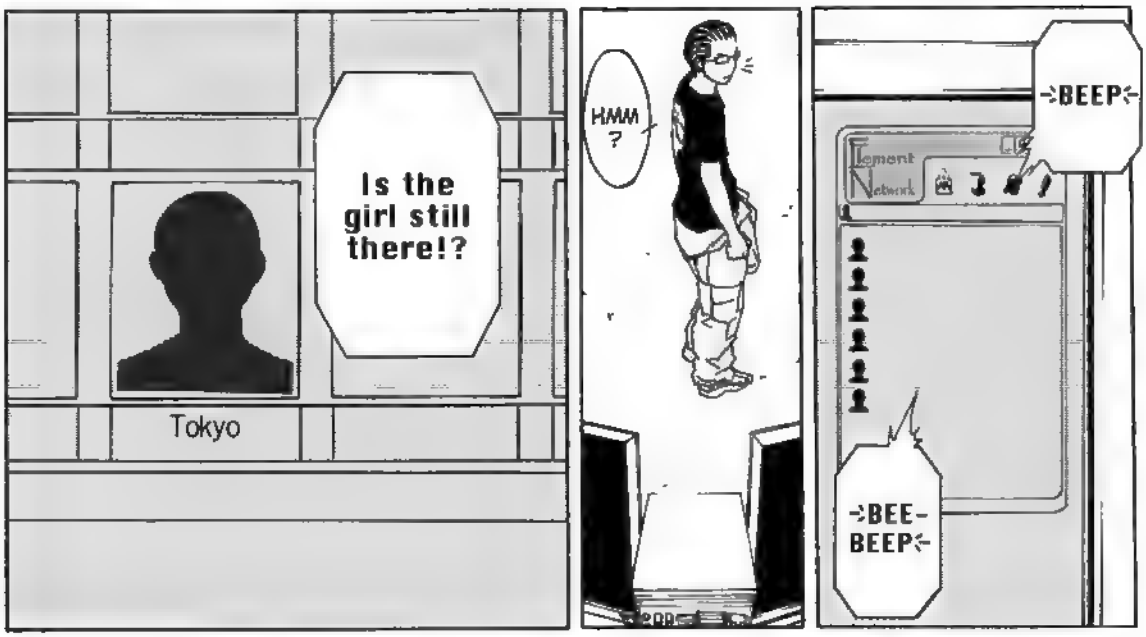
...IT WOULD BE THAT POWERFUL ...?
...THERE WOULD BE NOTHING ON EARTH IT COULD NOT CUT IN TWO.
AND IF SUCH A THING EXISTED...
I DOUBT IT COULD BE UTILIZED IN ANYTHING OTHER THAN AN EXTREMELY PRIMITIVE WEAPON.
...YOU HAVE NO REASON TO FEAR THIS TECH-NOLOGY.
I HAVE A FEELING...
...YES, WELL ...
...SOME-THING ALONG THOSE LINES...
...SAY, A KNIFE...
...OR A KATANA ...?
PRIMITIVE ...?
.....

.....
ITS THINNESS IS WHAT MAKES IT SO SHARP.
PHYSICALLY SPEAKING, THE THICKNESS OF A BLADE INTERFERES WITH ITS ABILITY TO REND TOUGH MATERIALS.
ガチャ
GACHA (CLICK)
.....
YES, INDEED...
AS LONG AS THE SIDES OF THE BLADE HAD AS LOW A FRICTION COEFFICIENT AS POSSIBLE, IT COULD WORK.
BUT A LITTLE BIT OF THICKNESS WOULD BE JUST FINE.
ピッ
PI (BEEP)

Tokyo
SO HOW EXACTLY DID YOU ACTUALIZE MY MONOLAYER BONDING TECHNIQUE?
.....
FASCI-NATING...
WE COMBINED IT WITH A LOW-FRICTION COATING PROCESS WE JUST RECEIVED FROM OVER-SEAS.
THUG LIFE
WE'VE NEVER SEEN EACH OTHER'S FACES OR MET IN PERSON, BUT I FEEL LIKE I KNOW YOU WELL ENOUGH.

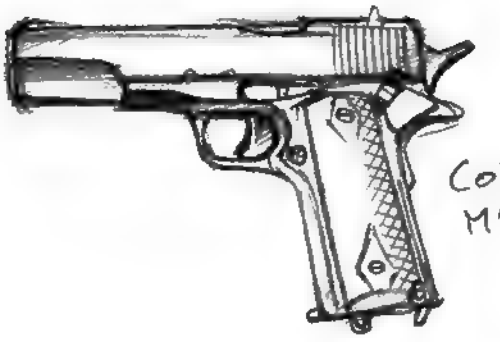
I JUST DON'T WANT IT TO GO TO WASTE.
BEING A RESEARCHER, WOULDN'T YOU PREFER TO ANNOUNCE YOUR FINDINGS TO THE SCIENTIFIC COMMUNITY?
.....
OFF LINE
Tokyo
BEEP
We'll do our best with it.


THUG LIFE


Is the girl still there!?
Tokyo
HMM ?
BEEP
Element Network
BEE-BEEP

?
WE WERE GONNA SEND HER HOME ONCE WE KNEW SHE WOULD BE SAFE...
...UH...
YEAH...
THUG LIFE
.....
WHY DO YOU ASK...?

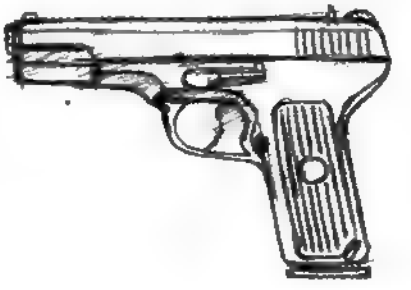
WHAT?
"GET AWAY" ...!?
WHAT DO YOU MEAN ...!?
I'm coming to make contact.
HUH?
OFF LINE
BEE-BEEP!
Tokyo
Don't let her get away!
.....
...IT'S NOT LIKE SHE'S SOME DANGEROUS CRIMINAL...
WHO THE HELL WAS THAT...?



Colt 45
M1911A1

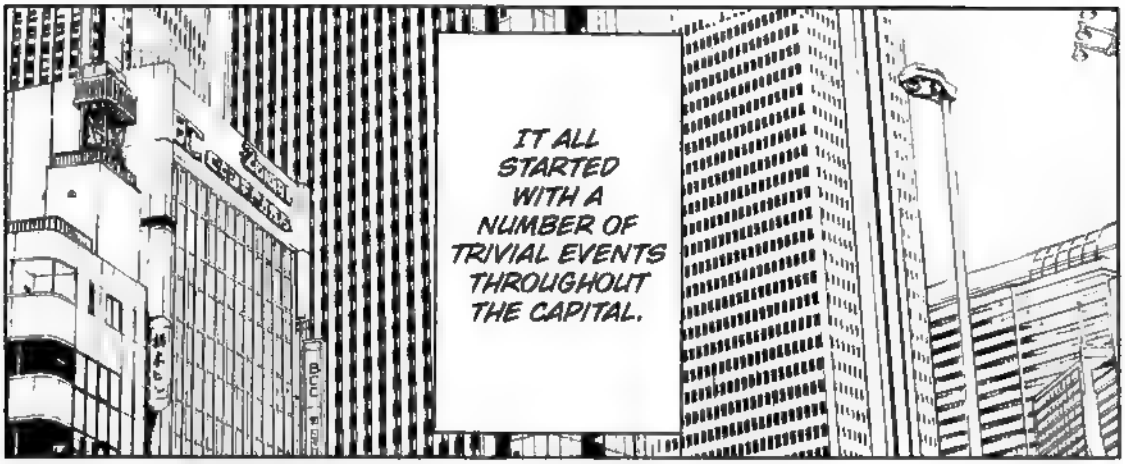
SIG-SAUER
P226.

CZ75



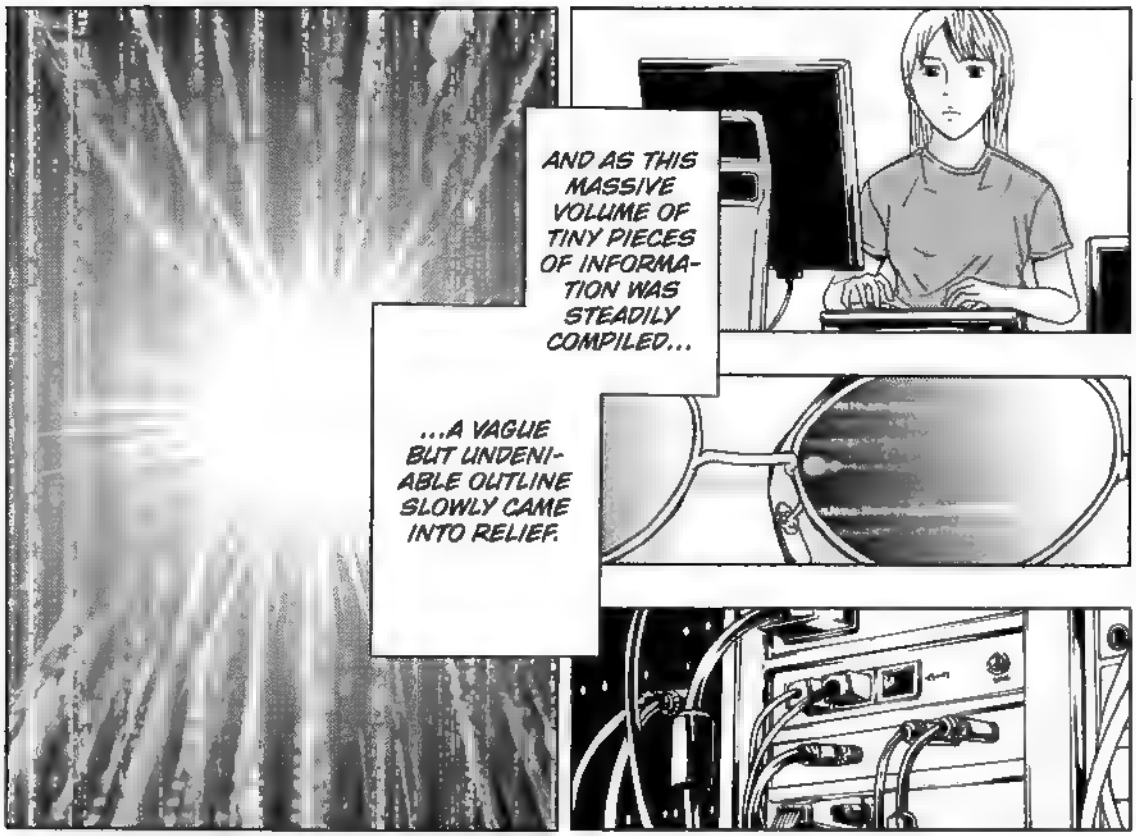
Tokarev
TT-33

Until
Death
do us
Part

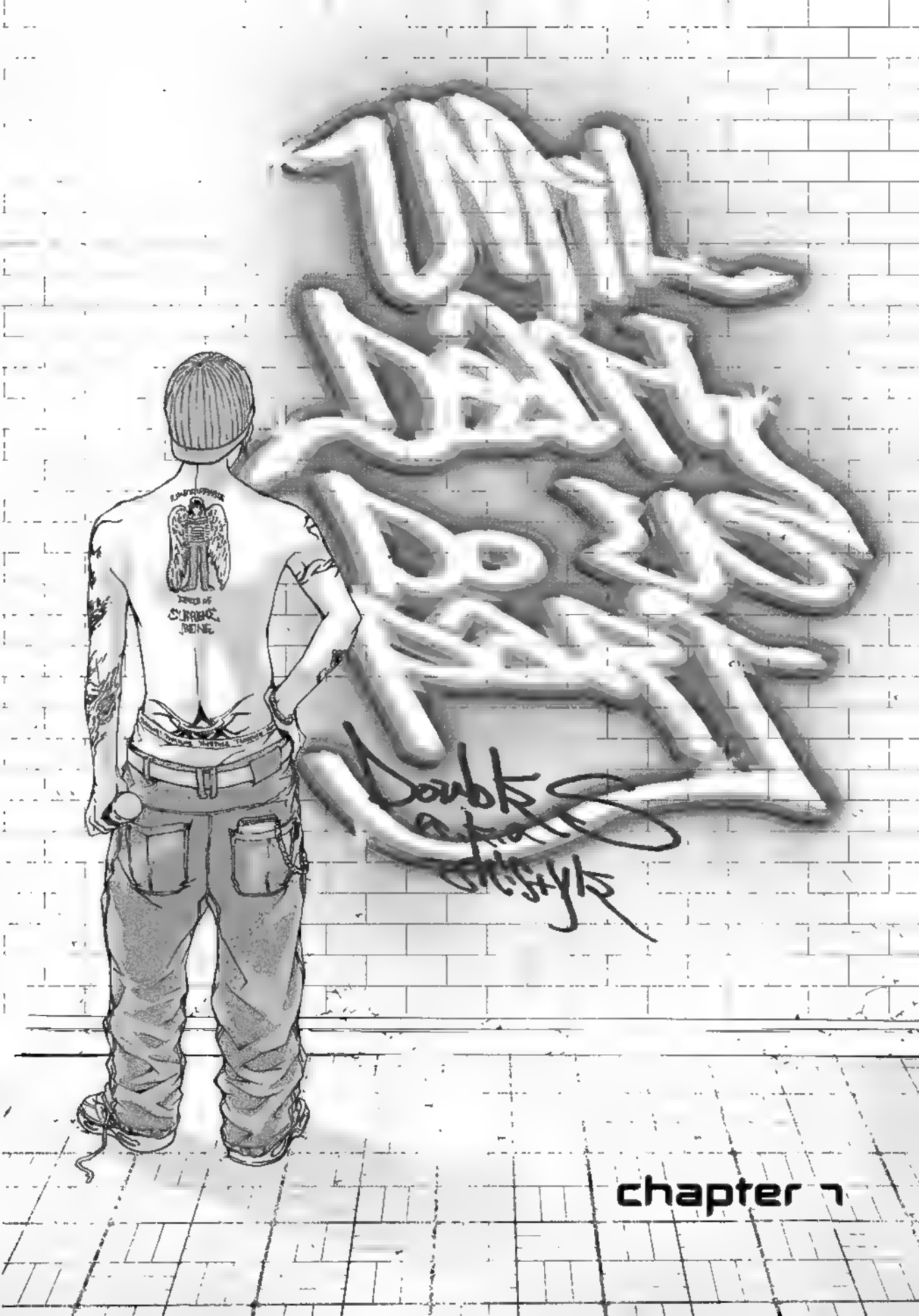

IT ALL STARTED WITH A NUMBER OF TRIVIAL EVENTS THROUGHOUT THE CAPITAL.

BAR

EVEN THOUGH THESE EVENTS WERE SEEMINGLY UNREMARK-ABLE...
...THEY INSTILLED A SENSE OF UNEASE IN THOSE WHO WITNESSED THEM.
AND SO, DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY...
...EACH OF THESE PEOPLE LOGGED ON TO THE NETWORK TO REPORT AND AGGRE-GATE THESE EXPERIENCES.


AND AS THIS MASSIVE VOLUME OF TINY PIECES OF INFORMATION WAS STEADILY COMPILED...
...A VAGUE BUT UNDENIABLE OUTLINE SLOWLY CAME INTO RELIEF.

SOMETHING WAS GOING DOWN.


chapter 7

ブオオオオ
BUOOO (VROOMM)
警視庁

I MEAN, YOU'RE NOT EVEN IN CHARGE OF THE INVES-TIGATION.
...BUT WHY ARE YOU SO FIXATED ON IT?

IT'S CERTAINLY A FASCINATING INCIDENT, GENDA-SAN...

HUH...?
...I SAW A FAMILIAR FACE NOT FAR FROM THE SCENE...

...HE WOULD FIT THE BILL PERFECTLY.
NOT SOMEONE I WAS PARTICULARLY CLOSE TO... BUT ASSUMING THIS WAS THE ACT OF AN EXPERT...

BUT STILL, THE ONLY VICTIMS IN THIS CASE WERE KAKUHOUKAI, SO IT'S NOT LIKE THE BRASS IS GOING TO BE THAT AGGRESSIVE IN FOLLOWING IT UP, RIGHT?
NOT TO MENTION THERE'S SOME EVIDENCE THERE THAT COULD EASILY HAVE BEEN FALSIFIED...
YOU THINK THERE'S A LINK?
I'D HAVE REPORTED IT LONG AGO IF I WAS SURE OF IT.
BUT I'M NOT, WHICH IS WHY I'M WORKING MY OWN CONNECTIONS.
WE SHOULD BE DISCARDING THE LEAST LIKELY EXPLANATIONS.
... MMM ...
.....
PLUS, HOW DO YOU SEARCH FOR A WEAPON THAT DOESN'T EXIST?
...YOU'RE JUST WORKING OFF A HUNCH, AREN'T YOU?
I MEAN...

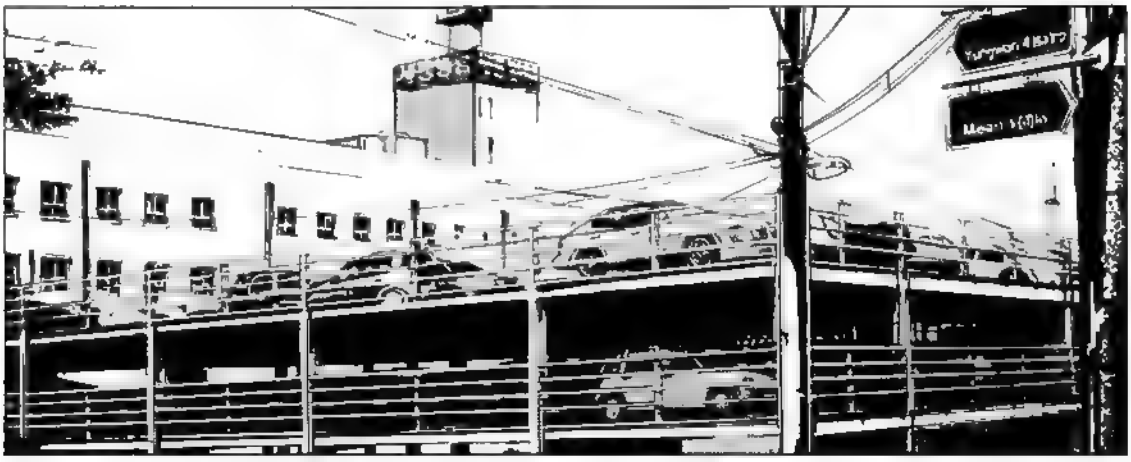
BUT THAT ISN'T WHAT WE SHOULD BE FOCUSING ON.
IF WHAT YOU'RE SAYING IS TRUE, THOSE DETAILS WILL SURFACE IN NO TIME!
DON'T GIVE ME THAT SHIT.
I'M NOT WORKING OFF SOME MAGICAL SIXTH SENSE.
IT'S EXPERIENCE BYPASSING YOUR USUAL THOUGHT PROCESSES TO TELL YOU SOMETHING IMPORTANT.
IRA
IRA (IRK)
...
HMM...
HAAH...
GIVE ME A PROPER RESPONSE!
...HMMM... THIS IS WHY I'M FOLLOWING UP ON THIS LEAD INDEPENDENTLY...

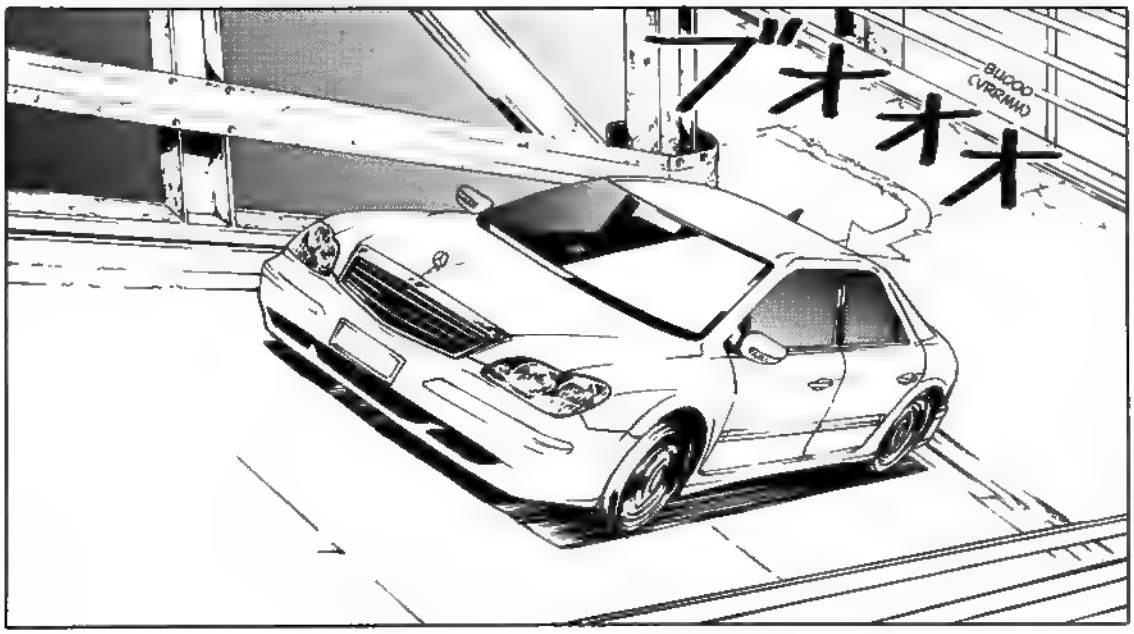
THANKS FOR EVERYTHING YOU DID YESTERDAY.
SURE THING!
...WHAT'S THE MATTER ...?
.....
?
I'LL BE OF MORE HELP TO YOU STARTING NOW.
HUH?
THUG LIFE

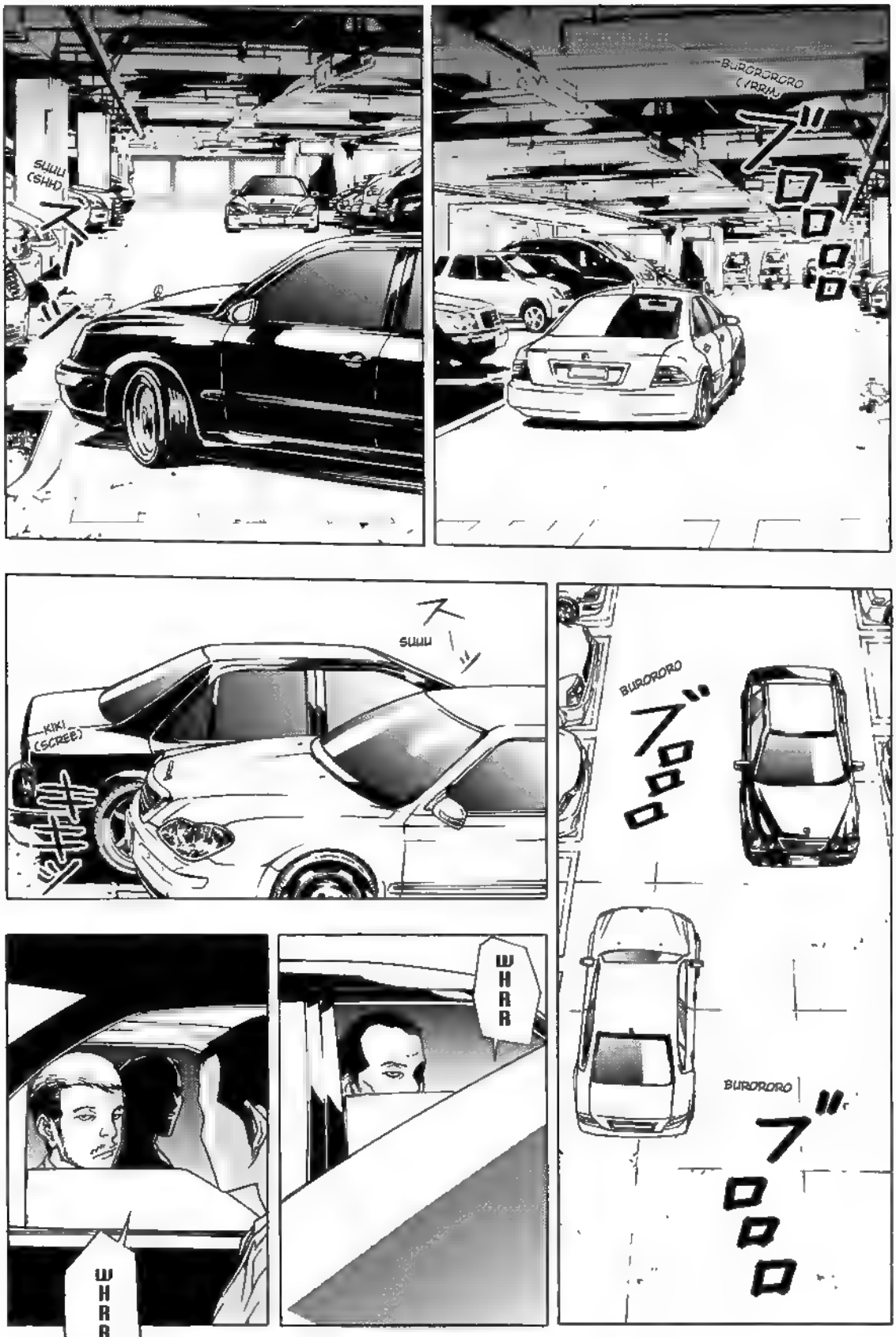
LET'S GO, YOU TWO!
THUG LIFE
NOTHING. DON'T LET IT BOTHER YOU...
OH, OKAY...
OKAY!
HEY!
WHAT ELSE CAN WE DO? SHE'S THE ONE THEY WANT.
OR WERE YOU THINKING OF LETTING THEM COME FOR HER HERE?
ARE WE TAKING HER SOME-WHERE!?

IN THE INTEREST OF PREVENTING INFORMATION FROM LEAKING OUT, THE LESS CONTACT WE MAKE WITH OTHERS IN THE GROUP, THE BETTER.
WELL, NO...
THU
LIF
...YOU'RE RIGHT. IT'D BE BETTER TO MOVE TO A DIFFERENT LOCATION, JUST TO BE SAFE...
THE LESS WE KNOW ABOUT EACH OTHER, THE LESS THAT CAN BE TOLD TO OUTSIDERS, RIGHT?
LET'S SEE...
I THINK I KNOW JUST THE PLACE TO MEET UP AT THIS HOUR...
MAKE IT QUICK.
THUG LIIE
YEAH, YEAH.

?
HUH!?
OH GREAT, WHAT DID YOU JUST THINK OF?
?



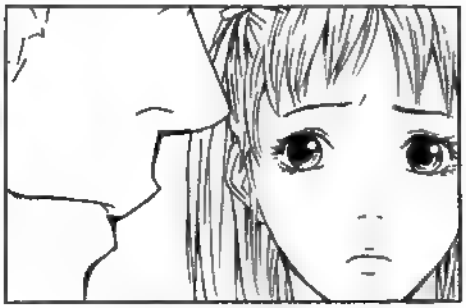

BLOOD (VRRMM)


SUUU (SHH)
BURORORORO (VRRM)
ブロロロロ
SUUU
KIKI (SCREE)
キキ
BURORORO
ブロロロ
BURORORO
ブロロロロ
WHRR
WHRRR

UMM...

?
...YOU DON'T NEED TO GO, MAMORU-SAN...

GACHA CALCIO
カチャ



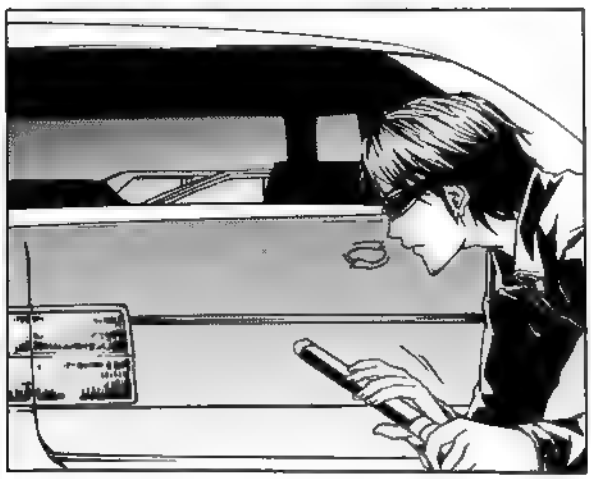
...ALL RIGHT...

IT'S A BIG TIME DRUG DEAL GOING DOWN.

...WHAT ARE THEY DOING ...?

WE GOT SOME INTEL ON THIS PARTICULAR CONNECTION A WHILE BACK, SO WE HAD A GOOD HUNCH IT'D BE HAPPENING TODAY.

Wait, "Blade."



.....
We saw plenty of your handi-work last night.
Allow my team to handle this one, as a show of respect.
HUH?
GYURURURU (SCREECH)
GAGAGA (SCRRR)
BLOOOOO (VROOMM)
ZUSHAAAA (ZSHHH)
KIKIK!!! (SCREECH)

NOBODY MOVE!
WHAT?
!!?
BA (LEAP)
GACHA
ガチャ
GACHA (CLICK)
ガチャッ
ZA (ZSHH)
ザッ

GYURURURU (SCREEE)
BUOOOO (VRMMM)
FLOOR IT!
SHIT!
GA (STOMP)
GACHA (SHICK)
WHAT THE HELL WAS THAT? SOME KINDA POLICE SPECIAL ASSAULT TEAM?
WHO'S THAT...?

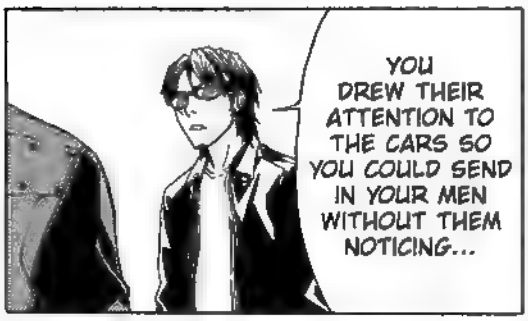
SUPA
(SLASH)

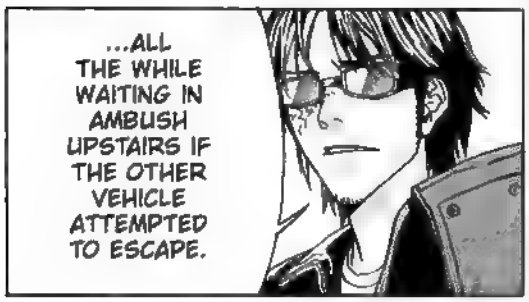
GYAG'YAGYA (SCREEE)
DOGA (SLAM)
KIKIKIKI (SCREECH)
AAGH...
WHAT THE FUCK'S GOIN' ON!?
DOGA
DAN (THWUD)

JA (FSHK)
BISHU (SHWIGH)
AAAH!
BASU! (THWUK)
AAAH!
WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU WAITING FOR!?
AHH, SHIT!
GACHA (CLACK)
GACHA
THE DOOR WON'T OPEN!
WHAT!?
THIS ONE WON'T EITHER!

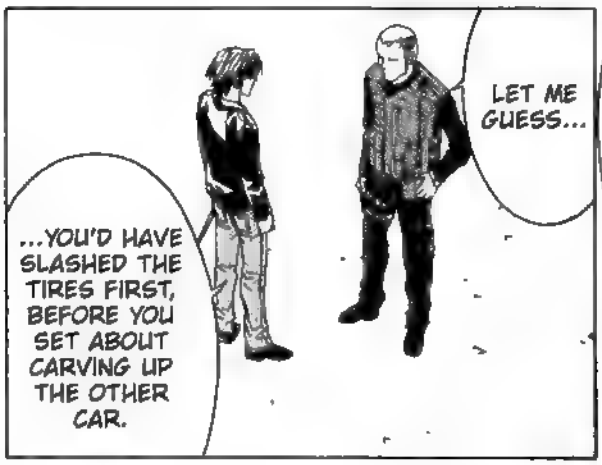
I SEVERED THE LINKS ON THE INNER DOOR HANDLES. YOU'RE NOT GOING ANY-WHERE.
DROP THE GUNS AND GIVE YOUR-SELVES UP.
7"
BURORORO (VRMM)
GACHA
ガチャ

ザッ
ZA (ZSHH)


YOU DREW THEIR ATTENTION TO THE CARS SO YOU COULD SEND IN YOUR MEN WITHOUT THEM NOTICING...


...ALL THE WHILE WAITING IN AMBUSH UPSTAIRS IF THE OTHER VEHICLE ATTEMPTED TO ESCAPE.

GACHA (CLICK)
ガチャ


LET ME GUESS...
...YOU'D HAVE SLASHED THE TIRES FIRST, BEFORE YOU SET ABOUT CARVING UP THE OTHER CAR.

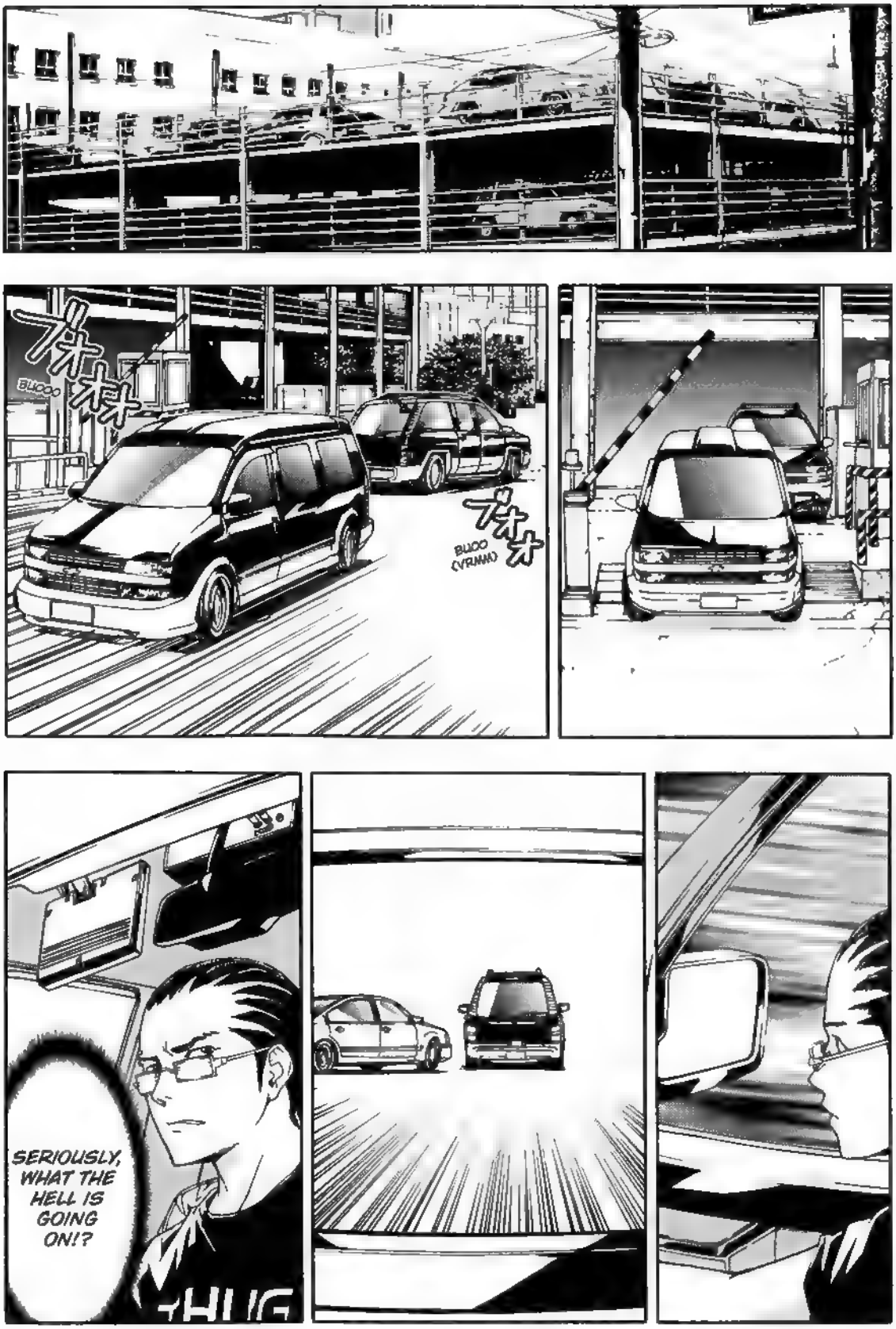
BUT THAT TAKES TIME. I WANTED THIS CLEANED UP AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE, SO I EMPLOYED MY METHODS.

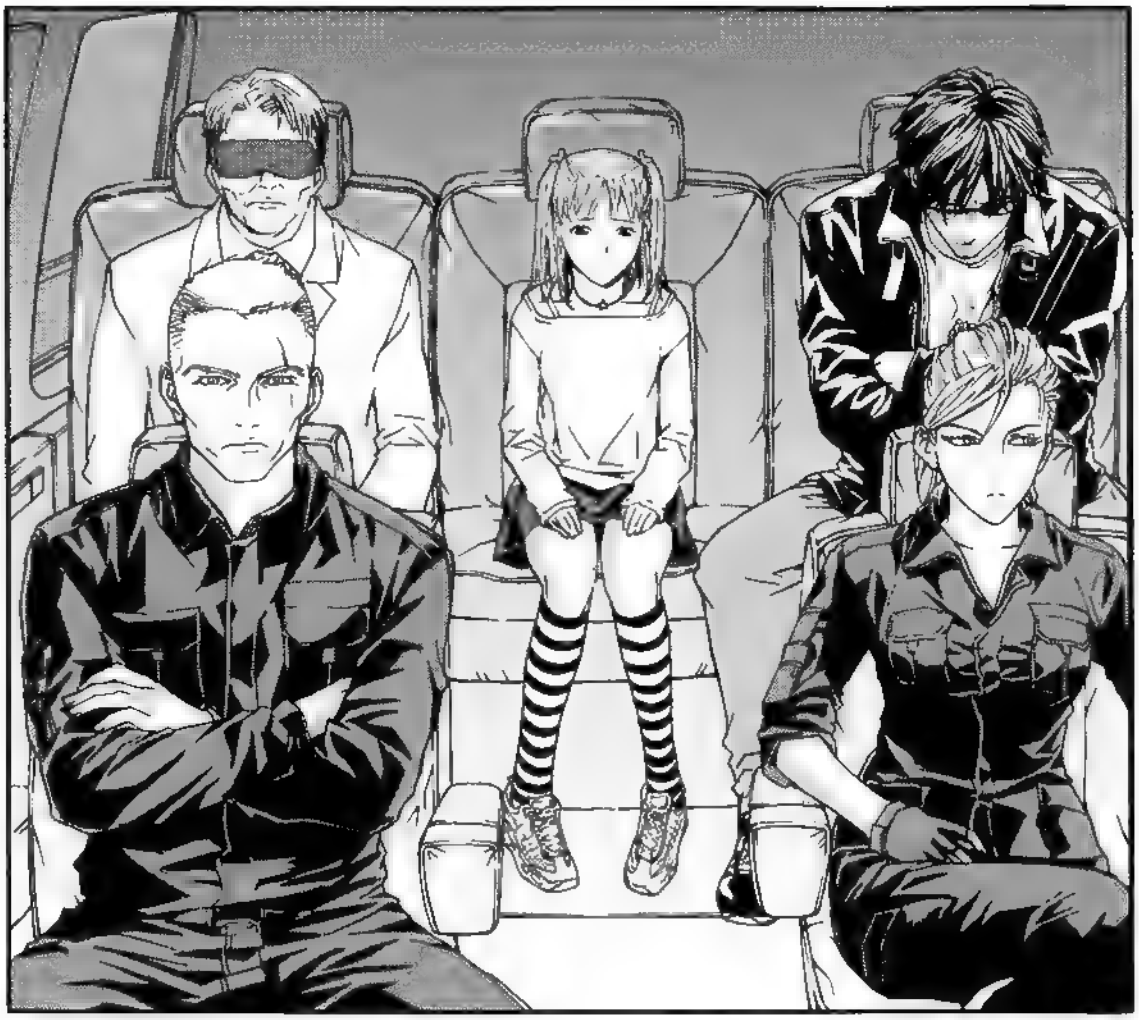
AN IMPRESSIVE OPERATION.

I'M THE TEAM LEADER, "ALFA."
I HAVE TWO REQUESTS. BOTH OF THEM INVOLVE THE GIRL UNDER YOUR CARE.
YOU'RE WITH THE ELEMENT NETWORK TEAM THAT HANDLES INTERNATIONAL CRIMES...
TEAM "THE WALL," RIGHT? WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?
GACHA
ガチャッ
BRAVO.

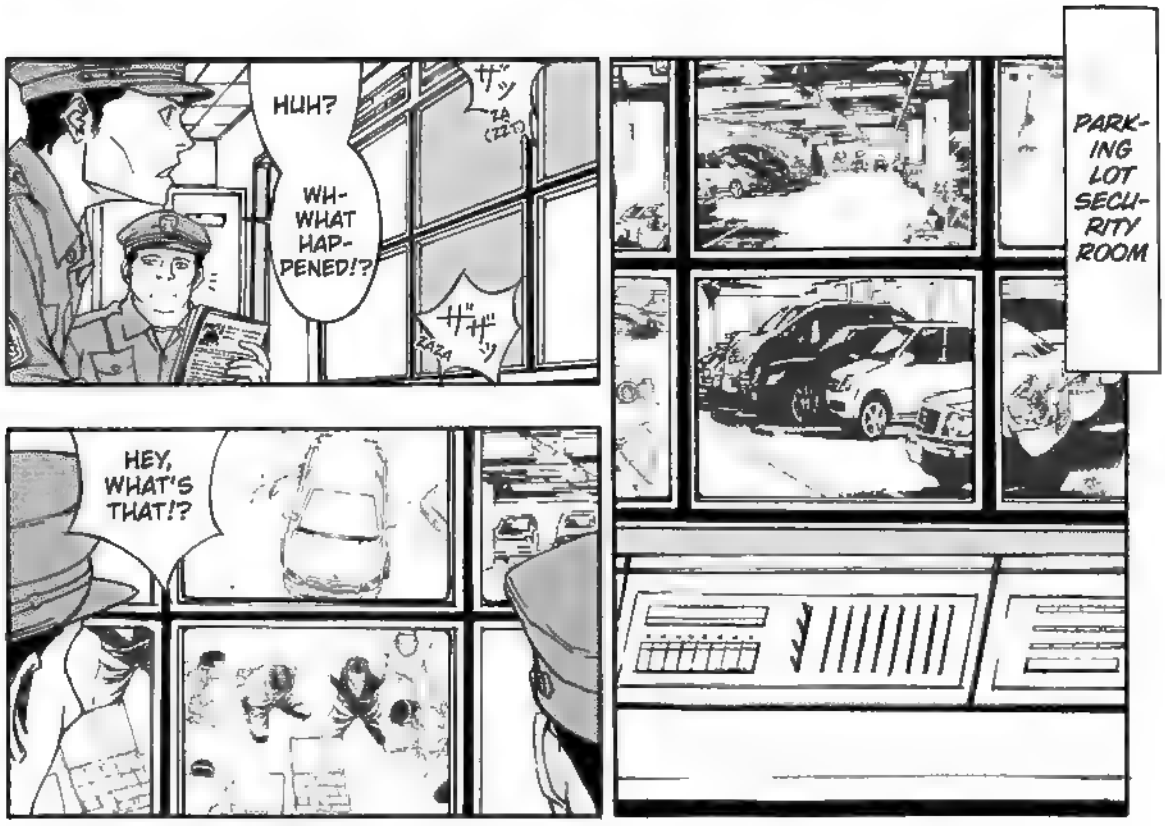
WE'D LIKE TO HAVE HIM ANALYZE HER ABILITIES.
AHH...
?
THAT'S ONE OF OUR COOP-ERATIVES.
HE'S AN AUTHORITY ON QUANTUM PHYSICS, I HEAR.
THE OTHER MATTER ...
...IS AN EXTREMELY CRUCIAL CASE INVOLVING A VERY DANGEROUS TERRORIST GROUP.
.....
I WANT TO MAKE USE OF HER TALENTS.

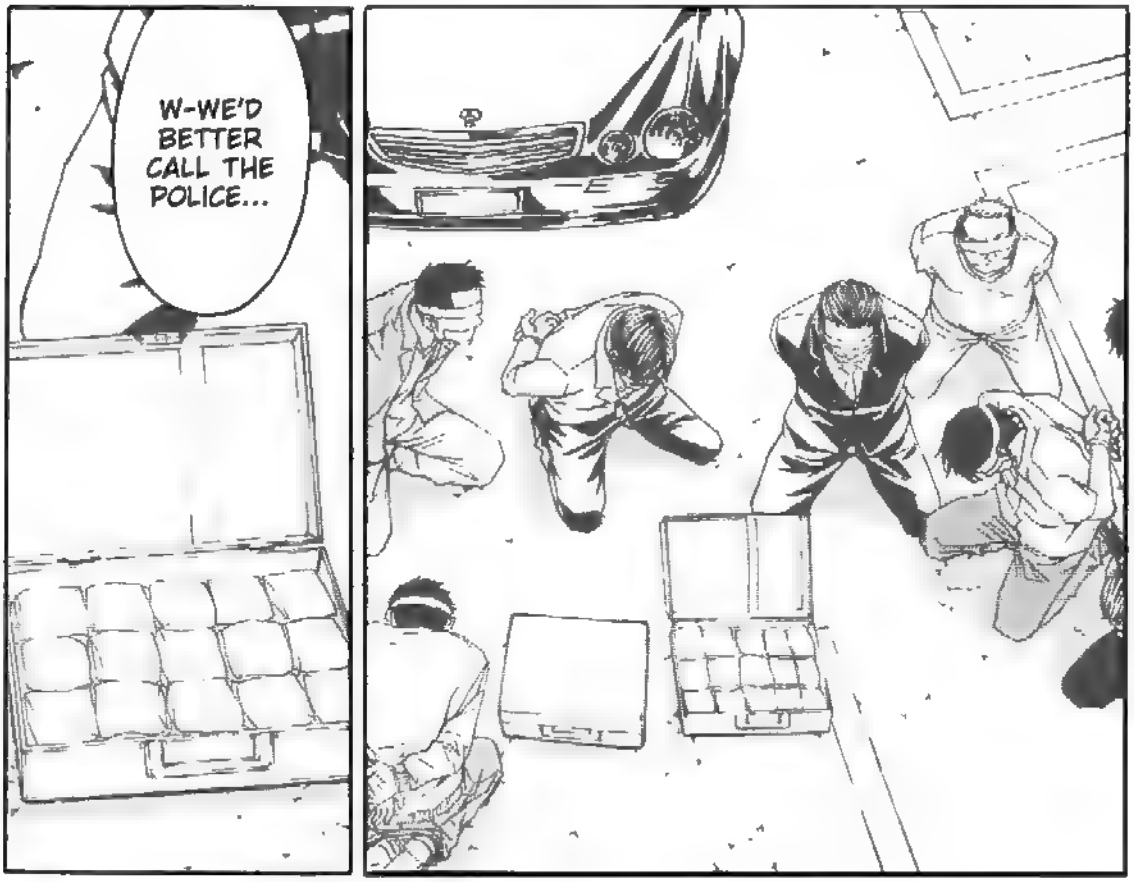
chapter 8

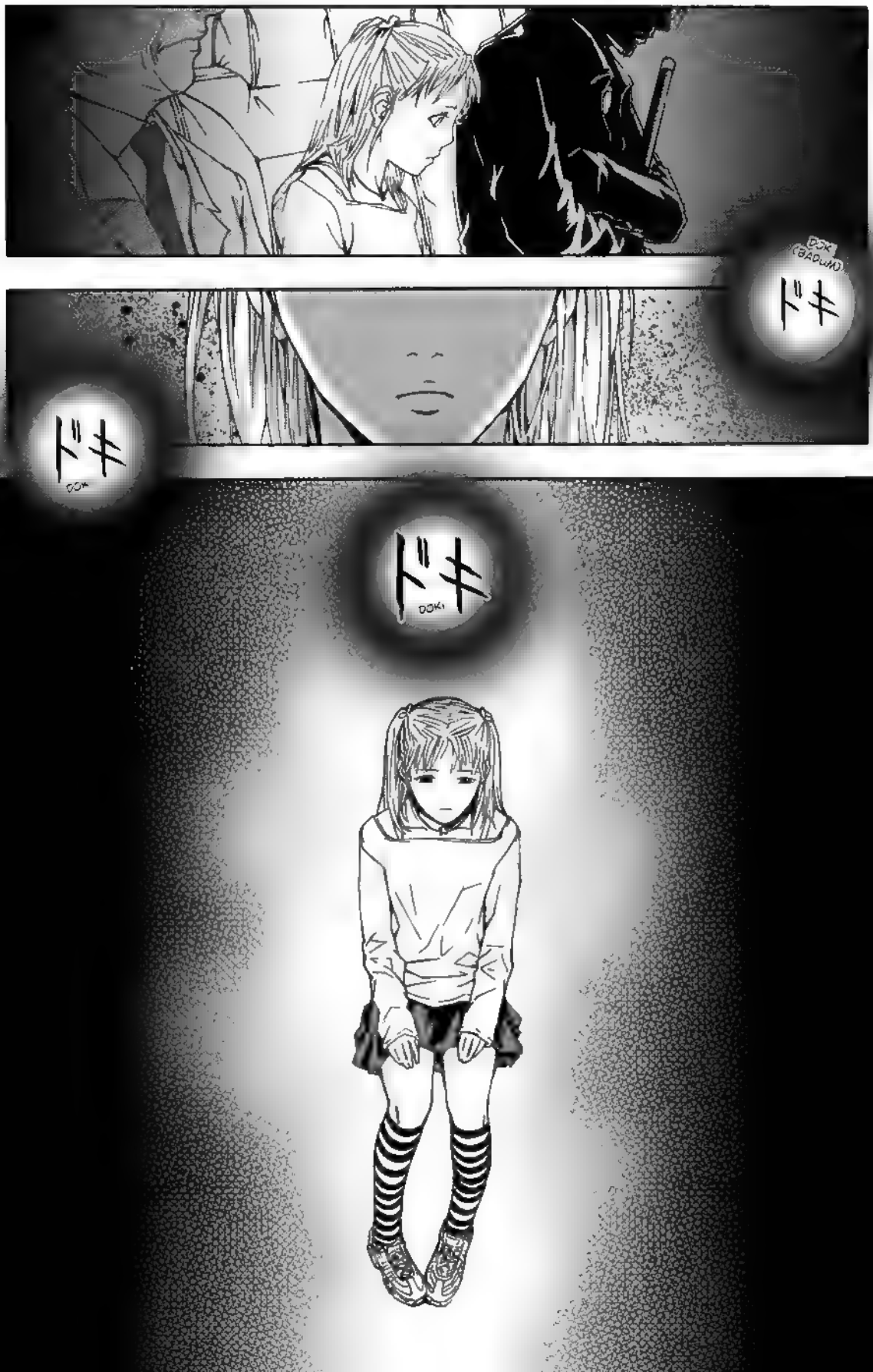

ブオオ
BUOOO
ブオオ
BUOO (YRNM)
SERIOUSLY, WHAT THE HELL IS GOING ON!?



ピッ
PI (BEEP)
TALK ABOUT NERVE...
IS HE SLEEPING?
TEA


HUH?
WH-WHAT HAP-PENED!?
ザッ ZA
ザザッ ZAZA
PARK-ING LOT SECU-RITY ROOM
HEY, WHAT'S THAT!?


W-WE'D BETTER CALL THE POLICE...

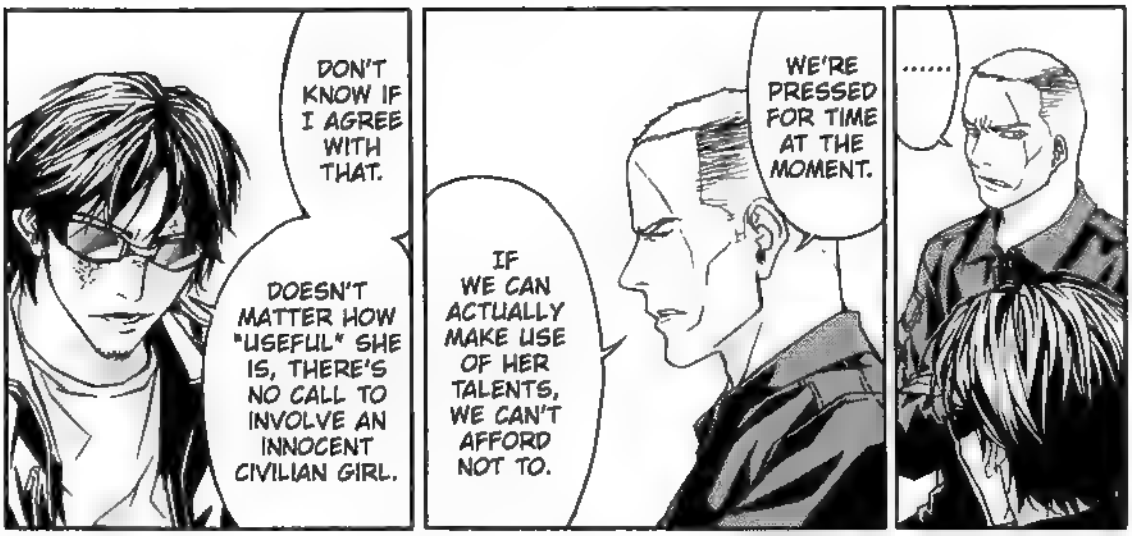

ドキ
DOKI
(BAD LUCK)
ドキ
DOKI
ドキ
DOKI

.....
ZZZ...
ZZZ...

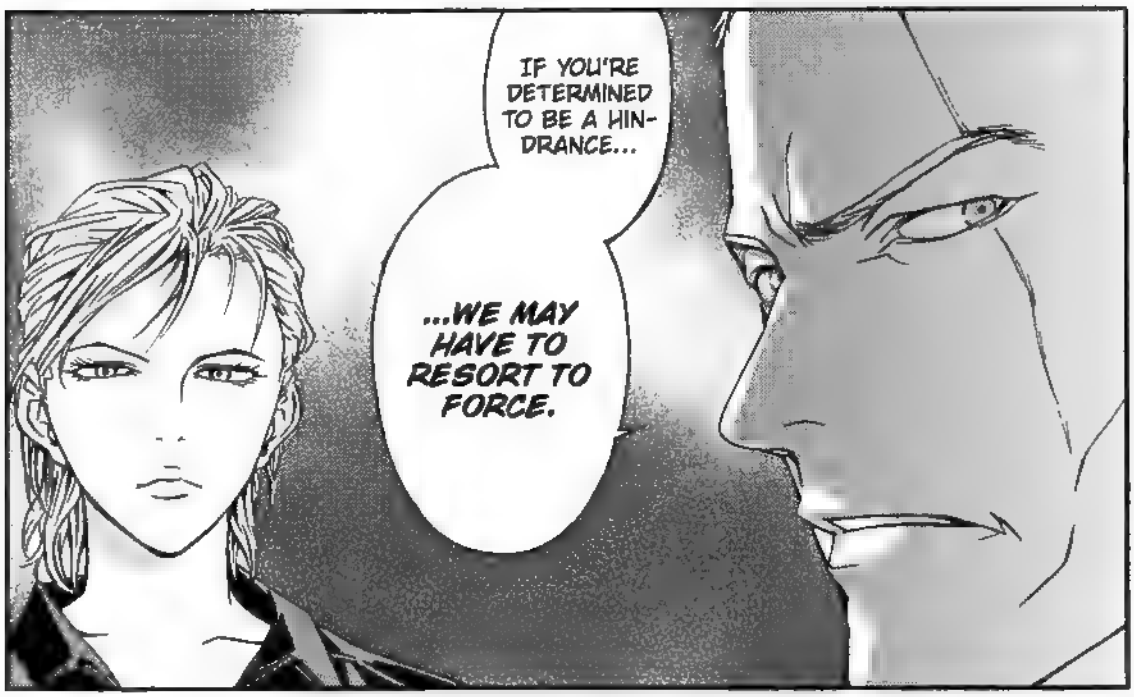
.....
.....
THEY TOLD ME THAT AS LONG AS I COULD HANDLE THE WORK, THAT WAS ENOUGH.
THE POLICE WERE ALSO LOOKING FOR TECH-SAVVY GUYS TO FIGHT CYBER-CRIMES, BUT MY LOOKS DIDN'T FIT THE BILL FOR THEM.
THUG LIFE
WHEN I FIRST TOOK THIS JOB...
...I WAS JUST DROPPED INTO THE ROLE OF BACKUP MAN.

...AND NOW I WIND UP WITH THIS STRANGE GIRL ON MY HANDS...
AND I FIGURED THAT IF I WANTED TO FIGHT CRIME, IT WOULD BE A LOT BETTER THAN HIDING IN MY ROOM AND DOING NOTHING.
BUT ONCE I ACTUALLY GOT INVOLVED, MY PARTNER TURNED OUT TO BE A FREAK...
EVEN I'VE GOT A BAD FEELING ABOUT THIS ONE.
NOT ONLY THAT, BUT CAPTAIN ALFA OF THE CRIME-FIGHTING TEAM "THE WALL" SHOWS UP TO TELL US THAT THERE'S AN INTERNATIONAL TERRORIST GROUP HIDING IN TOKYO.
MAMORU AND I HANDLE URBAN FELONIES.
THIS IS WAY OVER OUR HEADS.

...THE SITUATION MUST BE MORE DESPERATE THAN I THOUGHT.
...IT'S TAKING HIM LONG ENOUGH ...
YOU KNOW, IF A TEAM LIKE THE WALL...
...HAS BEEN REDUCED TO RELYING ON A SINGLE LITTLE GIRL...
STOP IT, SIERRA.
HOW DARE YOU IMPLY —!?
GATAN (THUMP)
SO YOU CALL ME "BLADE," AND YOUR TEAM MEMBERS GO BY MILITARY PHONETIC CODE.
NOT TERRIBLY ORIGINAL WITH NICK-NAMES, ARE YOU?
!?


DON'T KNOW IF I AGREE WITH THAT.
DOESN'T MATTER HOW "USEFUL" SHE IS, THERE'S NO CALL TO INVOLVE AN INNOCENT CIVILIAN GIRL.
IF WE CAN ACTUALLY MAKE USE OF HER TALENTS, WE CAN'T AFFORD NOT TO.
WE'RE PRESSED FOR TIME AT THE MOMENT.
.....

WE HAVE TO EXPECT A PLOT THAT WILL AFFECT HUNDREDS OF PEOPLE. WE'RE TALKING ABOUT A MASSIVE FINANCIAL BLOW TO THE ECONOMY.
WE DON'T KNOW THE TERRORIST GROUP'S EXACT PURPOSE, BUT WE'RE CERTAIN THEY'RE GOING TO MAKE A MOVE SOON.
I UNDERSTAND YOUR CONCERN, BUT THIS IS AN EMERGENCY.


IF YOU'RE DETERMINED TO BE A HINDRANCE...
...WE MAY HAVE TO RESORT TO FORCE.

BA (WHISK)
ガチャ
GACHA (CLICK)
.....
LET ME TELL YOU RIGHT OFF THE BAT...
...THAT WE DO HAVE A PLAN TO DEAL WITH YOU, IF IT SHOULD COME TO THAT.
THEY'RE ALREADY STARTING, HUH...?

...YOU DON'T SAY...
.....
.....
STOP THAT!

THIS SQUABBLE WILL BENEFIT NEITHER OF YOU!
HAVE YOU COME UP WITH ANYTHING, DOCTOR?
I MEAN THAT SHE CANNOT PREDICT THE ACTIONS OF UNFAMILIAR PERSONS WHO ARE ACTING ENTIRELY INDEPENDENT OF HER OWN WILL.
.....
BUT YOUR TEAM CANNOT MAKE USE OF HER.
WELL, AS FAR AS I CAN TELL, SHE HAS THE TALENT. WHEN THE CIRCUMSTANCES ARE RIGHT, SHE PASSED MY PREDICTION TEST WITH 100% ACCURACY.
WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

...THE FUTURE IS A STATE THAT CONTAINS ALL POSSIBILITIES.
SO SPEAKING ON THIS TOPIC FROM A QUANTUM THEORY PERSPEC-TIVE...
SO WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO CATCH THESE GLIMPSES OF THE FUTURE?
?
MY AREA OF EXPERTISE IS QUANTUM THEORY, NOT E.S.P.
I'M AFRAID YOU'VE ALREADY LOST ME.
I DON'T NEED THE THEORIES.
.....
LET'S ASSUME THAT THE POWER TO SEE THE FUTURE EXISTS.
.....
NOW, LET'S DISREGARD THE THEORY THAT THE HUMAN BRAIN EXISTS IN A QUANTUM STATE. SO, HOW DOES THIS ABILITY COME ABOUT?
UNDER WHAT CONDITIONS COULD IT EXIST?

VERY WELL...
I SUPPOSE IT WOULD BE TRICKY TO EXPLAIN IF WE START GETTING INTO SCHRÖDINGER AND THE UNCERTAINTY PRINCIPLE.
SO I'LL TRY TO BE SIMPLE AND CONCISE.
WHAT SHE HAS IS NOT QUITE FORESIGHT AS MUCH AS IT IS A HIGH-FUNCTIONING ABILITY TO MAKE PREDICTIONS, YOU MIGHT SAY.
AND WHEN THE PROPER CIRCUMSTANCES ARE NOT IN PLACE, HER ODDS OF ACCURATE PREDICTION LOWER DRASTICALLY.
... HMM ...
WELL, THE THEORY DOESN'T MATTER TO ME IF THERE'S NO WAY FOR US TO MAKE USE OF HER...
.....
IN OTHER WORDS, IF IT CONCERNS PEOPLE SHE DOES NOT KNOW OR ACTIONS SHE'S NOT AWARE OF...
...THERE IS NO WAY FOR THOSE EVENTS TO FALL WITHIN HER PREDICTIVE PARAMETERS.

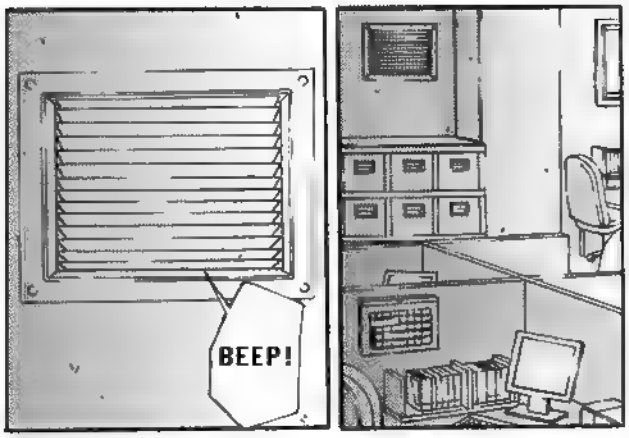
IN THE WORLD OF BATTLE, LEARNING TO READ THE OPPONENT'S MOVE AHEAD OF TIME AIN'T UNHEARD OF.
YOU DON'T SEEM VERY SURPRISED BY THIS...
QUANTUM THEORY ITSELF IS THE ULTIMATE FORM OF ARMCHAIR DISCUSSION.
WHAT WE ACTUALLY KNOW FOR SURE IS ONLY THE TIP OF THE ICEBERG— THE VAST MAJORITY OF OUR THEORIES CANNOT BE PROVEN.
.....
WE'LL HAVE TO FOCUS ON JUST MINIMIZING DAMAGE, THEN...
...SO THIS WAS A WASTE OF TIME...
WHEN I'M ON A ROLL, I CAN PRACTICALLY READ TWO MOVES AHEAD.
DON'T JUMP TO CONCLU-SIONS.
CONSIDERING THAT, IT DOESN'T SEEM SO CRAZY THAT SOMEONE COULD DEVELOP THAT SENSE INTO SOMETHING MORE POWERFUL.

.....
WHAT IF SOMEONE CONNECTED TO HER WERE TO TAKE AN ACTIVE ROLE IN YOUR CASE?
WOULDN'T SHE BE CONCERNED? COULDN'T SHE BEGIN TO HAVE AN INKLING OF WHAT IS GOING ON?
THIS IS JUST OUR FIRST CLUE.
I'LL REPORT ANY FINDINGS OF FURTHER RESEARCH ON THE MATTER OVER THE INTERNET, AS USUAL.
.....
...?
...WHO, ME...?

I WANT YOU TO FOCUS ON SUPPORTING BLADE IN THE INTEREST OF SECURING HIS COOPERATION.
CHANGE OF PLANS, SIERRA.
I'LL ESCORT THE DOCTOR HOME AND RETURN TO THE TEAM.
KEEP A CLOSE LINE TO US. IT'S IMPORTANT THAT WE KEEP THE GIRL CONNECTED.
BECAUSE YOU'D STICK OUT.
IS THERE A PROB-LEM?
.....
UNDER-STOOD ...
THIS IS WHAT I HATE ABOUT MONO-CULTURAL COUNTRIES.
NO. IF I GO BACK TO THE TEAM, I'D JUST BE ON STANDBY WITH THE REST OF THE NON-ASIAN MEMBERS ANYWAY.

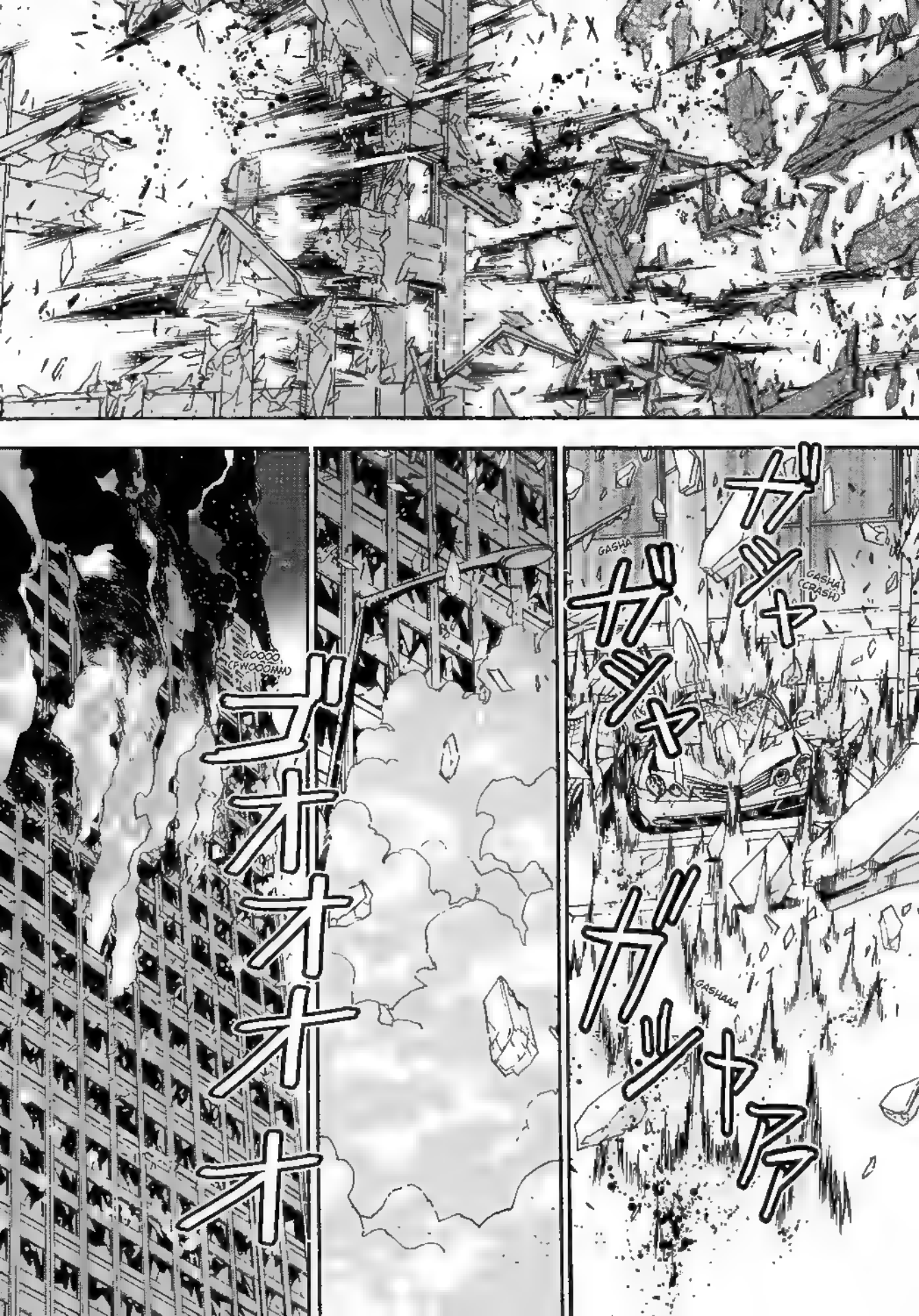
LOOKS LIKE WE'LL BE LIVING HERE FOR A WHILE.
WELL, THEN!
LET'S AIR OUT THAT STUFFY ROOM UPSTAIRS AND GO OUT TO BUY SOME NECESSITIES.
...WOULDN'T WANT TO BE STUCK WITHOUT A CHANGE OF CLOTHES, RIGHT?
R... RIGHT ...
GOOD IDEA...
OH.
.....

THEY'RE PROS. WE JUST HAVE TO TRUST THEM.
SUCK IT UP.
THUG
HEY.
THUG LIFE
YOU OKAY WITH LETTING THEM TAKE THE SITU-ATION OUT OF OUR HANDS LIKE THIS?
BESIDES, WE CAN'T JUST TAKE HER IN AND THEN TOSS HER BACK OUT INTO THE COLD.
.....
THUG LIFE
MORE IMPOR-TANTLY ...
...OUR REAL JOB STARTS WITH TONIGHT'S PATROL. GOTTA DRAW UP OUR PLANS.


BEEP!

KA
CRASH

DON-
(BOOM)


ガシャ
GASHA
ガシャ
GASHA (CRASH)
ガシャア
GASHAAA
ゴオオオ
GOOOO (WOOOHHH)

Translation Notes

Common Honorifics
no honorific: Indicates familiarity or closeness; if used without permission or reason, addressing someone in this manner would constitute an insult.
***-san*:** The Japanese equivalent of Mr./Mrs./Miss. If a situation calls for politeness, this is the fail-safe honorific.
***-sama*:** Conveys great respect; may also indicate that the social status of the speaker is lower than that of the addressee.
***-kun*:** Used most often when referring to boys, this indicates affection or familiarity. Occasionally used by older men among their peers, but it may also be used by anyone referring to a person of lower standing.
***-chan*:** An affectionate honorific indicating familiarity used mostly in reference to girls, also used in reference to cute persons or animals of either gender.
***-senpai*:** A suffix used to address upperclassmen or more experienced coworkers.
***-sensei*:** A respectful term for teachers, artists, or high-level professionals.

Yen conversion: While exchange rates fluctuate daily, a convenient conversion estimation is about ¥100 to 1 USD

Page 38
Kakuhoukai: The name of this organized crime syndicate means something to the effect of "Society/Group of the Horned Phoenix."

Page 67
Mamoru: Appropriately enough, the name "Mamoru" is the verb "to protect" in Japanese.

Page 164
Kanto: The region of Japan from Tokyo stretching east, literally meaning "gateway to the east."

Page 191
Special Assault Team (S.A.T.): A Japanese anti-terrorist police enforcement squad.

BONUS PAGE!
DOUBLE S
a.k.a. Thirteen
GOOD DAY!
I AM THE ARTIST OF UNTIL DEATH DO US PART, THE BLOCKBUSTER ACTION ROMANCE SET IN MODERN-DAY TOKYO, ABOUT MAMORU THE BLIND SWORDSMAN AND HARUKA THE GIRL WITH FORESIGHT INTO THE FUTURE...
JAN!! (TADA!!)
ジャン!!
...DOUBLE-S, AT YOUR SERVICE!!
AFTER HALF A YEAR OF SERIALIZATION, THE FIRST BOOK IS FINALLY OUT!!
BACKGROUND ARTIST: O-SECOND AGE 21 - ♂
WELL, OUR GOAL WAS "HALF A YEAR WITHOUT BEING CANCELLED."
I GUESS YOU'D CALL THIS A SUCCESS. CONGRATS, SENSEI.
AH!
THAT'S RIGHT! I REMEMBER WHEN I READ THE ISSUE OF THE MAGAZINE CONTAINING THE FIRST CHAPTER! IT WAS LIKE LOOKING AT A PILE OF CRAP SMUSHED INTO A MAGAZINE THAT WAS OTHERWISE FULL OF REAL MANGA... OH, THE SHAME...
...SOB... I SHOULD JUST END MY LIFE RIGHT HERE...

STAFF WANTED
1. Form Required
2. Interview
3. Written Exam
4. Swimsuit Judging
5. Winners Announcement
WHAT THE HELL IS THIS?
IN A PANIC, I LOOKED FOR HELP ON THE NET AND IN THE CLASSIFIEDS, BUT I COULDN'T FIND ANY!
?
Don't come looking for me!
EVEN WORSE, MY ONLY ASSISTANT FOR THE FIRST CHAPTER RAN AWAY WITHOUT GIVING ME ANY MORE HELP...
?
?
BIKU (TWITCH)
BIKU
DUN, DUN, DUNNN, DUN-DUN-DUNNN (DARTH V★DER THEME, RINGTONE FOR MY EDITOR)
BUT THANKS TO THE TIRELESS HELP OF MY MANAGER, L-SAN, AND MY EDITOR, F-SAN, I HAVE MADE SLOW BUT STEADY PROG-RESS.
ACK!
BEEP!
BEE-BEEP!
BEEP!
AND MY VERY FIRST ATTEMPT TO USE THE COMPUTER WAS A HORRIBLE DISASTER!
OH, CRAP! SORRY!
SUCKING UP TO HIS COMPUTER
FORGIVE ME, PC-SAMA! LET ME TRY AGAIN...
BACK-GROUNDS: 0-SECOND AGE 21, ♂
HE'S LOOKING OUR WAY, ONEE-SAN.
SHH! DON'T TURN YOUR HEAD!
JIIIIN (TOUCHED)
MY WONDERFUL ASSIS-TANTS... ♡
SCREEN-TONES: ELIZUE AGE 23, ♀
NOW I'VE GOT TWO STAFF MEMBERS TO HELP ME OUT WITH BACK-GROUNDS AND CLEANING UP MY ART.

I WILL BE A MAN, WAIT FOR THE RESULTS, AND HEAD STRAIGHT INTO VOLUME 2!!
I WOULD NEVER STOOP TO SOMETHING SO PATHETIC!
BUT DEAR READERS! I COULDN'T BEG YOU TO BUY THIS BOOK JUST BECAUSE I PULLED ALL-NIGHTERS DRAWING IT!
OR ASSURE YOU THAT I'LL DO BETTER NEXT TIME...
OR BEG YOU TO LOVE IT!
BAN (SLAM)
バンッ
SO...
THAT WORD ISN'T IN MY DICTION-ARY!
...PLEASE SAVE MY ASS!! (FEEL SORRY FOR ME!)
SO THIS IS WHAT BEING A MANGA ARTIST IS LIKE!
SENSEI... HAVE YOU EVER HEARD OF SELF-RESPECT?

HMM...
...
LET'S ROUND THIS OUT BY TALKING ABOUT THE MOST MEMORABLE SCENE FOR US AS WE DREW IT.
OR, "SENSEI'S TOUCH WAS BRILLIANT HERE!"
LIKE, "THIS SCENE WAS PRETTY AWESOME!"
BAN-ZAI!!
ANYWAY, LET'S CELE-BRATE OUR FIRST VOLUME!
BAN... ZAI...
cuzue
O-friend
UMM... DUDE...
...HAVE YOU EVEN READ THIS MANGA?
HMM...
...
...
TOUGH QUES-TION...
I DON'T REMEM-BER...EVER THINKING THAT...
HRMM ...
I DON'T WANT TO MAKE UP PAIRINGS! YOU JUST MADE ME IMAGINE THEM DOING IT!!
I WASN'T ASKING THAT! I'M TALKING ABOUT MEMORABLE SCENES!
YOU SHAD-DUP!!
LET'S MAKE THEM INTO A COUPLE. MAMORU IS THE BOTTOM!
DRAWS DOUJINSHI
OOOH, I THINK IGAWA-KYUN IS SUCH A CUTIE! MAMORU'S GOT SOME SEXY LIPS! ♡
PLEASE HELP ME SURVIVE WHEN VOLUME 2 COMES OUT!
...
GREEDY THUG.
MONEY IS AWE-SOME!!
THE SCENE WHERE HARUKA WINS ALL THOSE SCRATCHER TICKETS... MAN, I WAS PUMPED UP TO DRAW THAT SCENE!
...
WELL, WHAT DID YOU COME UP WITH, THEN?
ME? I CAN THINK OF PLENTY.
THE SCENE THAT WOULD DRIVE ANY MAN CRAZY
...

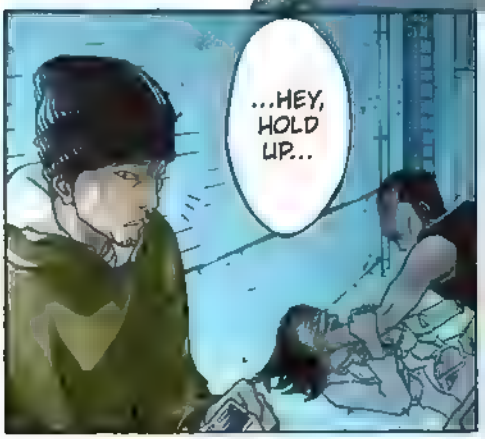
Art Staff
0-Second (21) ♂: Background Art
Euzue (23) ♀: Screentones

Military Resources
Lee Hyun Seok (warmania)

SPECIAL THANKS
Shingo Takano

Until
Death
do us
Part

...
...
MMPH!
NOOO!


...HEY, HOLD UP...

MMM... MMM!!
HEH HEH HEH...

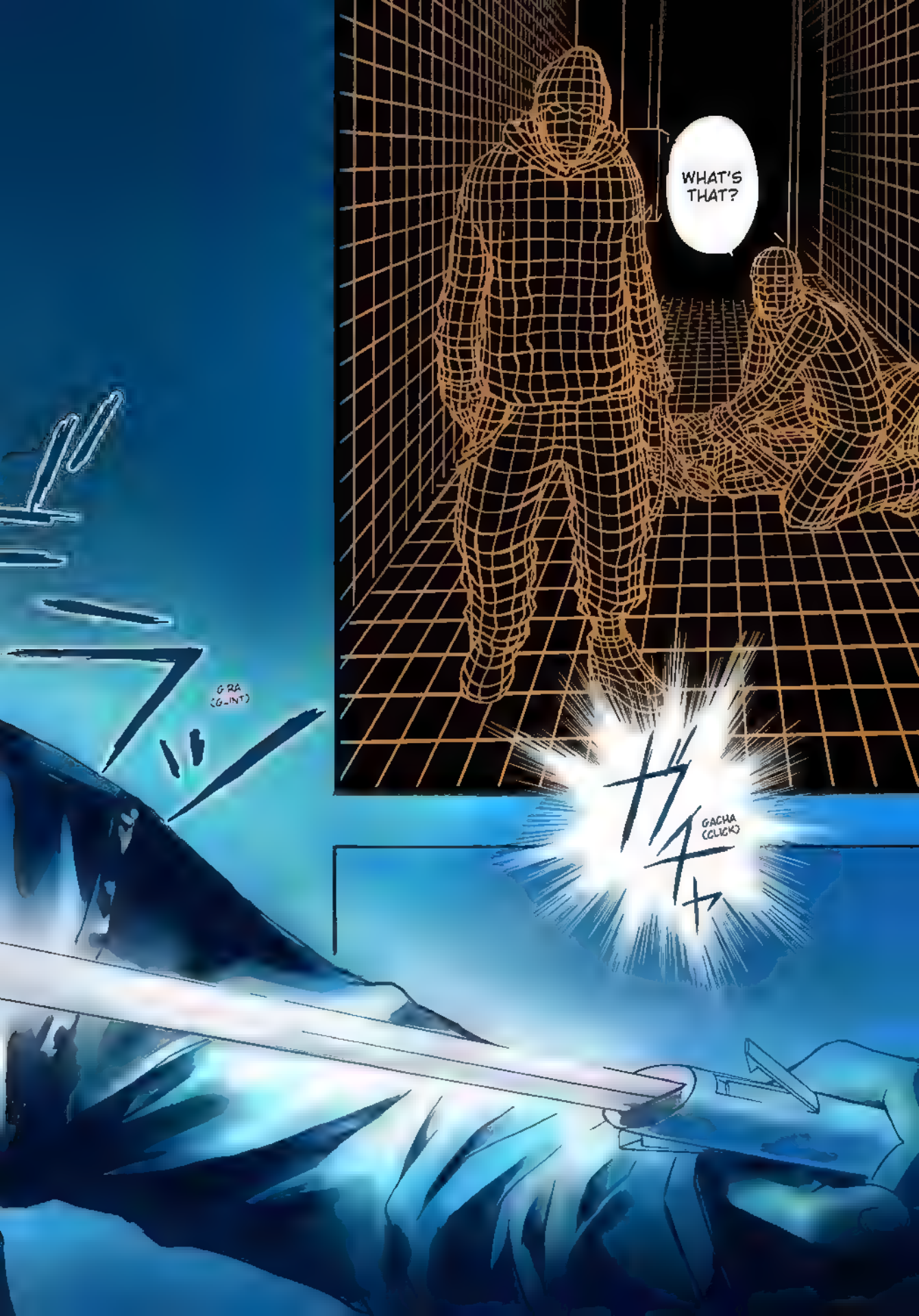
?

chapter 9

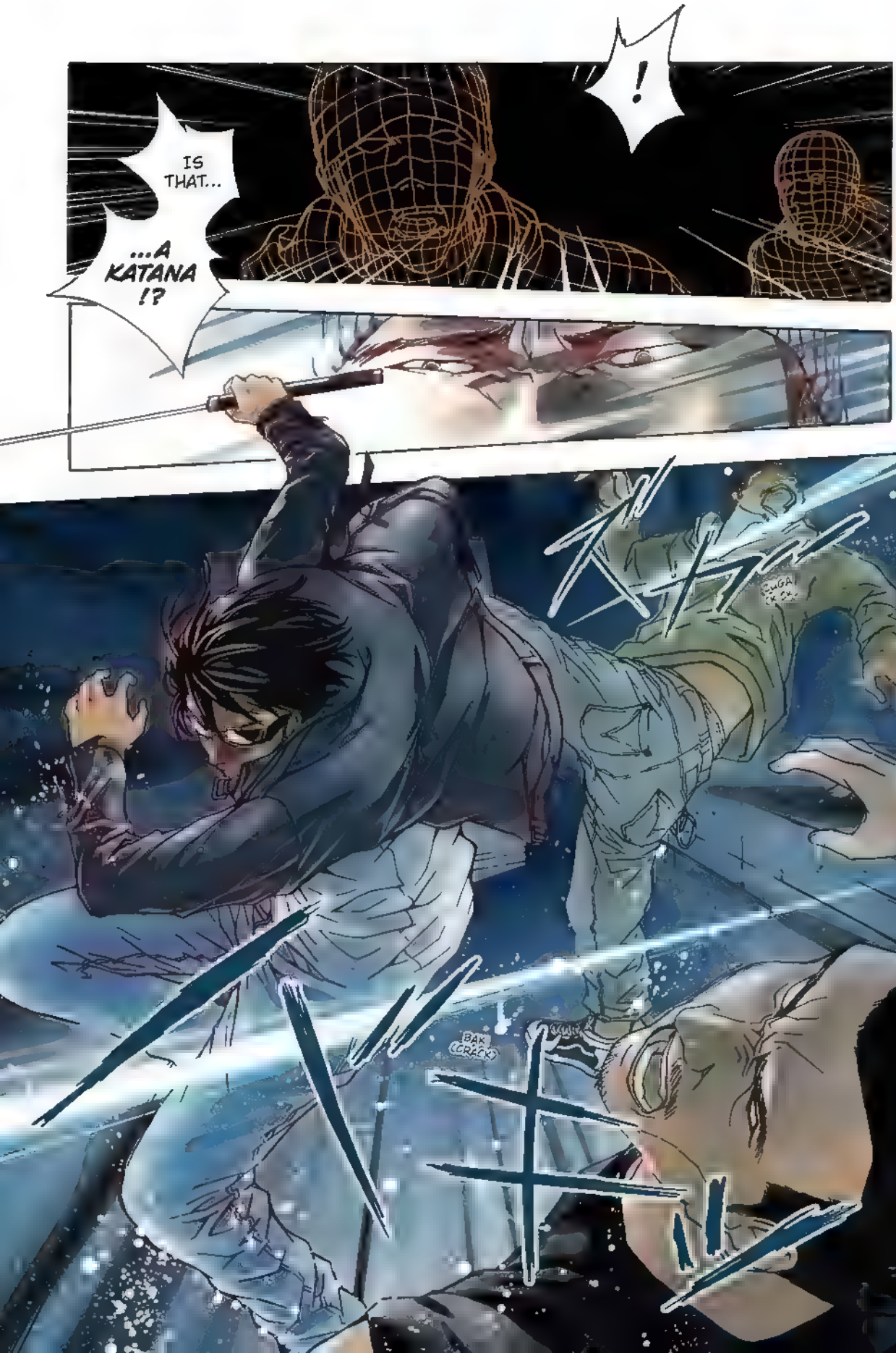
WHAT'S THAT?

GRA (G..INT)

GACHA (CLICK)


WHAT'S THAT?
GRA (G_INT)
GACHA (CLICK)

chapter 9

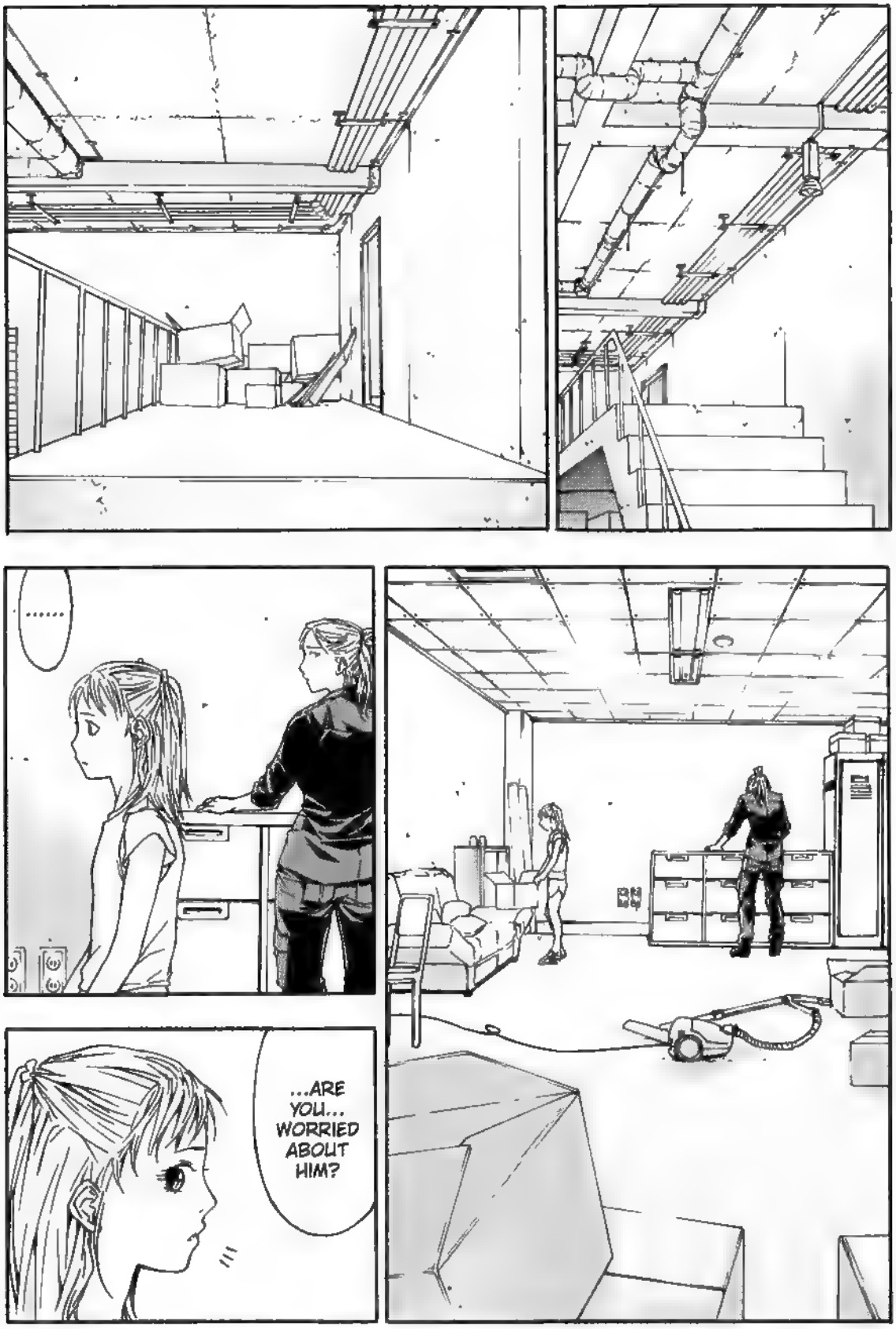

!
IS THAT...
...A KATANA !?
BAK (CRACK)

AAAH!
DOSA (THUD)
DOSA

...YOU OKAY?

YOUR PHONE'S ON THE GROUND BY YOUR LEGS.
CALL THE COPS.

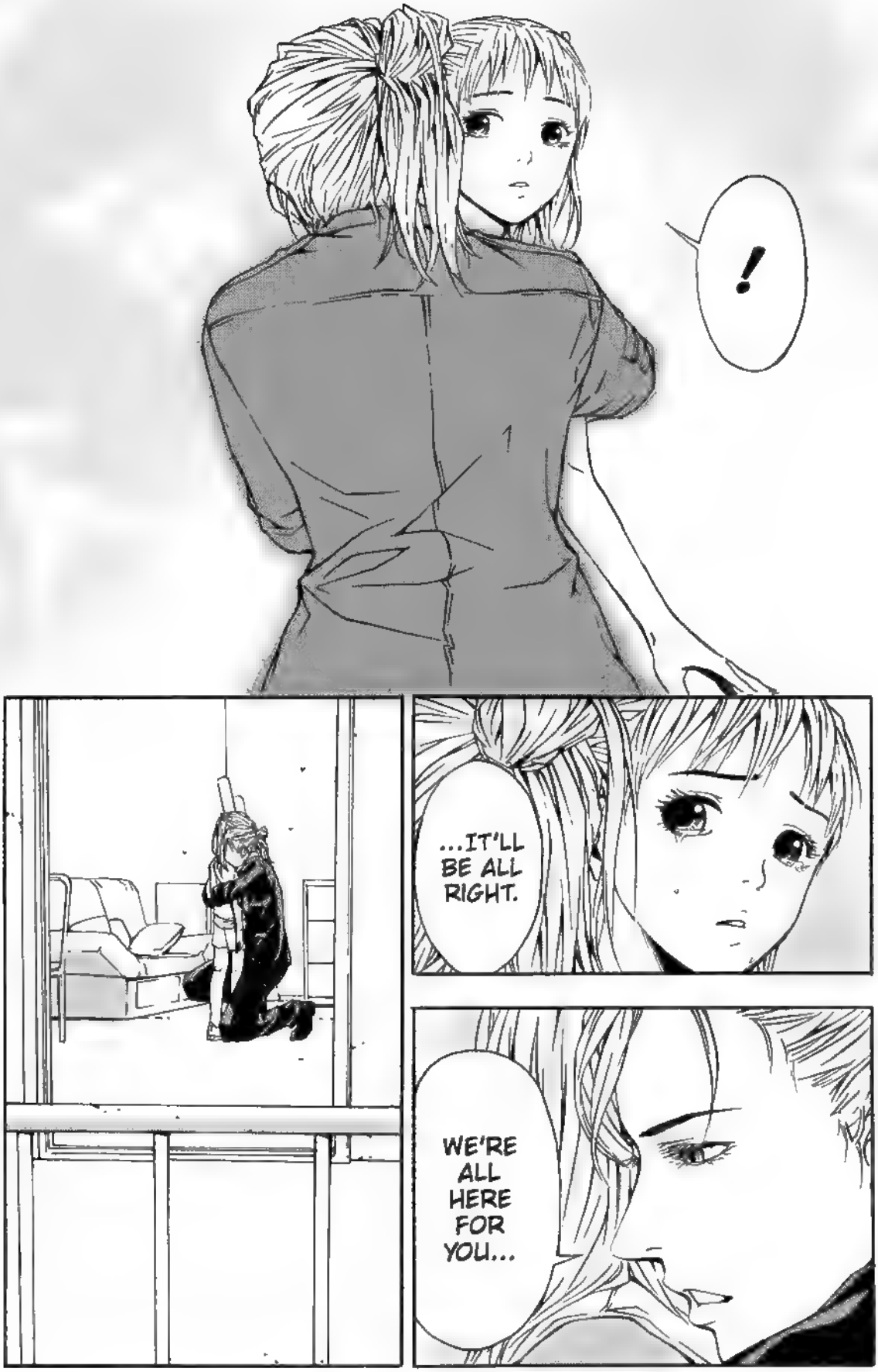
I've already notified them myself.
.....
BURU (SHIVER)
ブル
BURU
ブル
LET'S PULL OUT.
H-HELLO?
HELLO!!
IS...
...IS THIS THE POLICE!?
SU (SSK)
ス


.....
...ARE YOU... WORRIED ABOUT HIM?

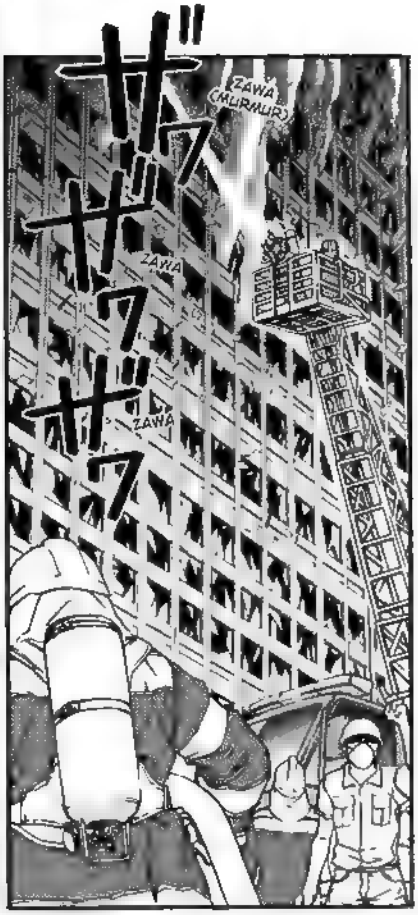
BUT AREN'T YOU SUPPOSED TO BE PROVIDING "SUPPORT" FOR MAMORU-SAN?
I'M FINE. NOTHING ELSE TO DO WHILE I WAIT FOR ORDERS ANYWAY.
I COULD HANDLE IT MYSELF.
ARE YOU SURE YOU'RE OKAY DOING THAT, SIERRA-SAN?
N-NO...
.....
.....
HE CAN MANAGE. HE KNOWS WHAT HE'S DOING.
OUR TEAM AS A WHOLE IS BETTER, BUT AS MUCH AS IT PAINS ME TO ADMIT IT, I COULDN'T HOLD A CANDLE TO HIM IN A ONE-ON-ONE FIGHT.

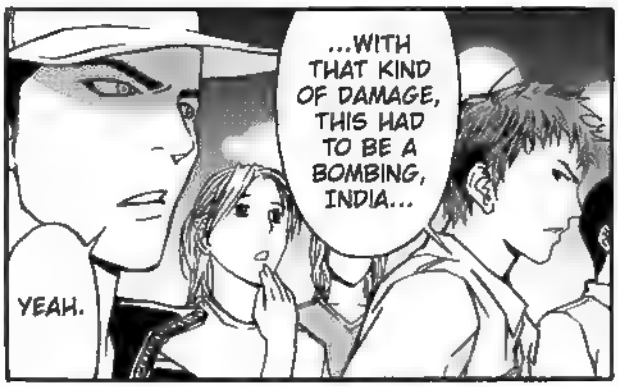
.....
HUH?
SHE WAS KILLED IN A TERRORIST BOMBING.
...I HAD A DAUGHTER...
IF SHE WERE ALIVE, SHE'D BE ABOUT YOUR AGE RIGHT NOW.
BUT WE'RE FACING AN EMERGENCY SITUATION HERE.
I HOPE YOU CAN FORGIVE THE CAPTAIN.
UM...
I KNOW.
BLADE'S RIGHT. IT'S WRONG TO KNOWINGLY LET A CHILD GET INVOLVED IN SOMETHING LIKE THIS.

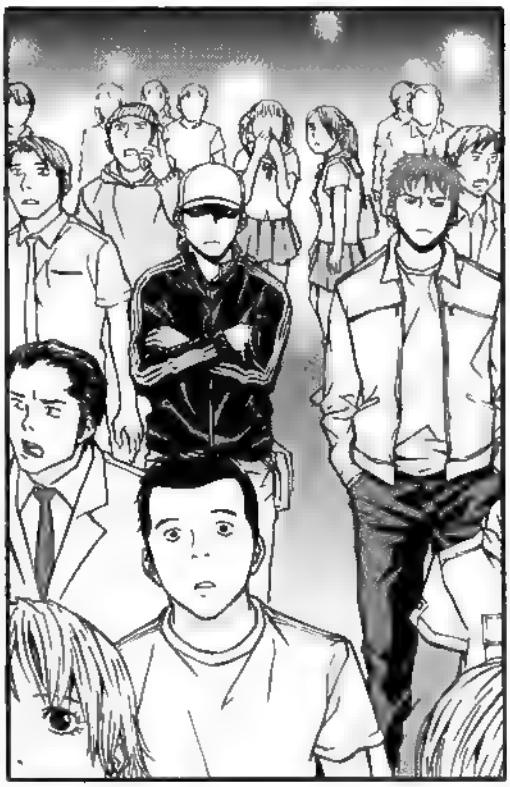
.....
I...
IN THE TEAM, WE GO BY CODE NAMES, BUT IT SEEMS RIGHT TO USE MY ACTUAL NAME HERE.
MY REAL NAME IS SERENA.
SIER-RA... SAN...
I'VE KNOWN WHAT I NEEDED TO DO, EVEN BEFORE I MET HIM.
ポロ
PORO (CRIP)
SO PLEASE... MAKE USE OF ME. I CAN HANDLE IT.
I NEVER THOUGHT I WAS SPECIAL OR ANYTHING LIKE THAT.
I THOUGHT THAT BEING ABLE TO TELL WHAT WAS ABOUT TO HAPPEN WAS SOMETHING ANYONE COULD DO, IF THEY THOUGHT ABOUT IT HARD ENOUGH.
I KNOW I'LL NEVER SEE MY MOTHER AND FATHER AGAIN, AND THAT I HAVE NO CHOICE BUT TO RELY ON MAMORU-SAN.
I CAN'T SURVIVE ON MY OWN...


!
...IT'LL BE ALL RIGHT.
WE'RE ALL HERE FOR YOU...

VASQ
GAYA
ガヤ
GAYA (CHATTER)
ガヤ


ザワ
ZAWA (MURMUR)
ZAWA
ZAWA


...WITH THAT KIND OF DAMAGE, THIS HAD TO BE A BOMBING, INDIA...
YEAH.



BASED ON THE TIMING, IT'S GOT TO BE THEM.

JUST HAVE TO PRAY THERE WERE NO VICTIMS.
WHAT DO YOU THINK THEY'RE AFTER, FOXTROT?
DUNNO.
NOTHING WE CAN LOOK INTO RIGHT NOW. LET'S PULL BACK AND REPORT IN.
HOME OF THE PRESI-DENT OF KURAMITSU ELEC-TRONICS

YES, WHO IS IT?
-RRRR-
-RRRR-
President Morita of Kuramitsu Electronics?
One of your company's branches has just been bombed.
WH-WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT!?
TONIGHT WAS ONLY A DEMONSTRATION.
IF YOU DO NOT MEET THE FOLLOWING DEMANDS...

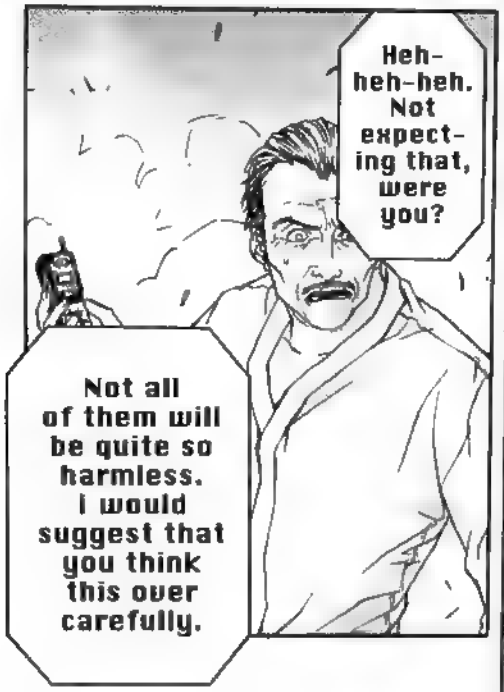
I MUST INSIST ON YOUR SILENCE IN THIS MATTER, OF COURSE.
WE ARE WATCHING YOU, YOUR FAMILY, AND YOUR CORPORATE OFFICERS AT ALL TIMES.
...your facilities will continue to be targeted.
!!?
AND WHAT ARE YOU DEMANDING?
Either one hundred million US dollars or a hundred of your new RE8998982C chips.

*AN ARMS EMBARGO ENACTED DURING THE COLD WAR. COCOM WAS FORMED BY WESTERN NATIONS TO PREVENT THE SALE OF WEAPONS AND TECHNOLOGY TO SOVIET BLOC COUNTRIES. IT WAS SCRAPPED IN 1994. IN THIS STORY, IT REFERS TO THE "NEW COCOM."

Just to be clear, I will arrange for another display of our capabilities.
Either you pay enough money to severely impair your company or secretly slip us your chips, thereby breaching the Wassenaar Arrangement...**
...or you hold your silence and lose the company.
THAT CHIP IS A COMPANY SECRET! HOW DOES HE—!?
That is why I am giving you a choice.
...L-LOOK, I DON'T KNOW WHAT IT IS YOU'RE PLANNING...
...BUT I CAN'T JUST AGREE TO SOMETHING THAT VIOLATES COCOM* STANDARDS...

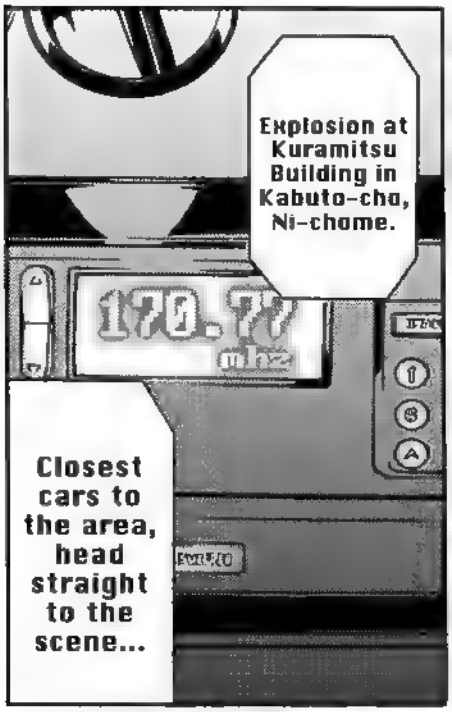
**AN INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENT SIGNED BY FORTY NATIONS IN 1996, DESIGNED TO PREVENT THE UNAUTHORIZED DISTRIBUTION OF WEAPONS TO TERRORIST GROUPS OR ROGUE NATIONS. NICKNAMED "NEW COCOM."

BON (BWOOM)
!


Heh-heh-heh. Not expecting that, were you?
Not all of them will be quite so harmless. I would suggest that you think this over carefully.

DOSU (THUMP)
ドス!
ガン
GAN (GONK)

→RRRR←
→RRRR←
GACHA (CLICK)
I will contact you again in two days to hear your answer.
→CLIK←
→BEEP←
→BEEP←
→BEEP←
Sir!
Our Kabuto office was just hit by a bomb...
...
.....
YES...I'M AWARE.
GET EVERY EXECUTIVE IN THE COMPANY TO THE OFFICE RIGHT NOW.


Explosion at Kuramitsu Building in Kabuto-cho, Ni-chome.
170.77 mhz
Closest cars to the area, head straight to the scene...

BLOOD (+PLUS)

THINK IT HAS SOMETHING TO DO WITH WHAT ALFA WAS TALKING ABOUT?
.....
?

I repeat, explo-sion at...
SOME KIND OF ACCIDENT?

THAT'S THE BUSINESS PARK.
YOU DON'T FIND ACCIDENTS IN A PLACE LIKE THAT AT THIS TIME OF NIGHT.

WHY DID SHE COME TO ME?
...HOW MANY HOURS A DAY DOES THIS GUY SLEEP...?
HUH!?
PERHAPS YOU ARE TO BE A VERY CRUCIAL FIGURE IN HER LIFE.
ACCORD-ING TO YOU...
...SHE CAN'T PREDICT THE ACTIONS OF PEOPLE SHE DOESN'T KNOW IN ANY WAY.
.....

SHE PICKED OUT THAT TINY POSSIBILITY OF FINDING YOU AS HER ONLY MEANS TO SURVIVE.
IT WAS THAT FRAIL STRAND OF HOPE FOLLOWED IN DESPERATION THAT LED HER TO YOU, WASN'T IT?

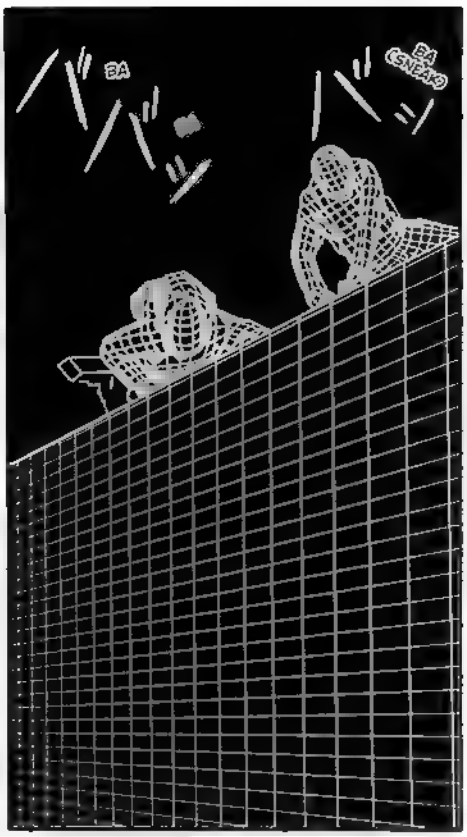
PERHAPS WITHOUT THE INTERVENTION OF THOSE MEN WHO WERE AFTER HER, YOUR MEETING WOULD HAVE OCCURRED IN A DIFFERENT WAY, IN A DIFFERENT FUTURE.
MMF.
THUG LIFE
WELL, HERE WE ARE. EX SOLID.
.....
EX SOLID
HMPH ...

BURORORO (VRUMMM)
...YOU GOT IT...
...SOMETHING'S WRONG...
JUST PASS BY...
BURORO
...ONE BLACK, ONE WHITE ...
NOTHING PARTICULARLY SUSPICIOUS ABOUT THEM...
WHAT'S UP!?
YOU SAW THOSE TWO GUYS STANDING THERE? WHAT'D THEY LOOK LIKE?

...COULDN'T SAY... I JUST DON'T WANNA MAKE THINGS ANY MORE COMPLICATED. LET'S PUT DEALING WITH EX SOLID ON ICE FOR TONIGHT.
LET ALFA KNOW THE PLAN.
ISN'T THAT STRANGE ENOUGH? THERE'S NOTHING TO SEE AROUND HERE.
THEY COULD BE ON A STAKEOUT.
FOREIGNERS HANGING AROUND EX SOLID AT THIS HOUR? YEAH, I GUESS THAT'S WEIRD.
YOU THINK IT HAS SOMETHING TO DO WITH THIS TERRORIST PLOT?
I MEAN, OUR ENTIRE PURPOSE IS TO PREVENT CRIMES BEFORE THEY HAPPEN, RIGHT?
IF THAT'S THE CASE, WE DEFINITELY CAN'T OVERLOOK THIS.
BATA (THUMP)
YOU GONNA BE OKAY ON YOUR OWN?
THESE AIN'T YOUR LOCAL YAKUZA.
GACHA (CLICK)

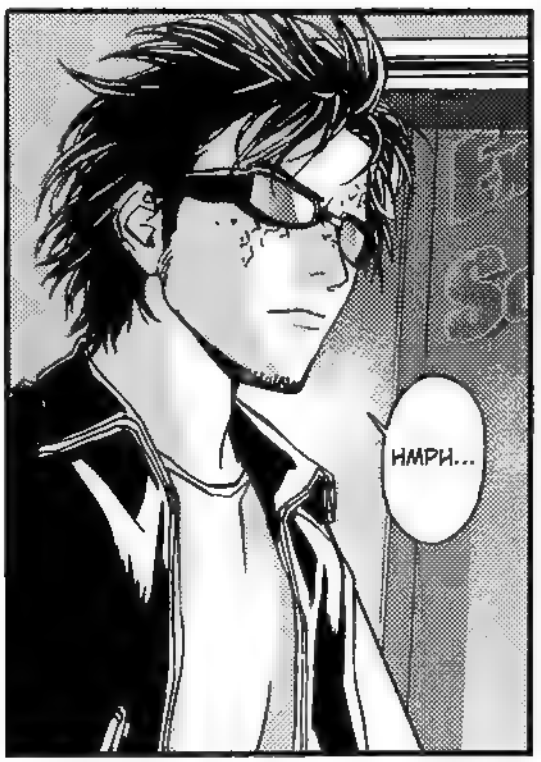
.....
...DON'T GO TOO FAR AWAY FROM THE CAR...
IT JUST ADDS TO THE PROCESSING LAG. THERE'S ONLY SO MUCH YOU CAN DO WITH THOSE SUNGLASSES ALONE!
YOU'VE GOT THE TRANS-MITTER, RIGHT?
Soul
パチ
PACHI (SNIK)
スタ
SUTA (HOP)

DA (DASH)
LOOKS LIKE THEY'VE GOT THE JUMP ON MY PLANS FOR TONIGHT.


BA
BA (SNEAK)

THIS ISN'T FUNNY, MAN! WHAT ARE YOU GONNA DO?

FIND OUT WHAT THEY'RE AFTER.


HMPH...

Until
Death
do us
Part

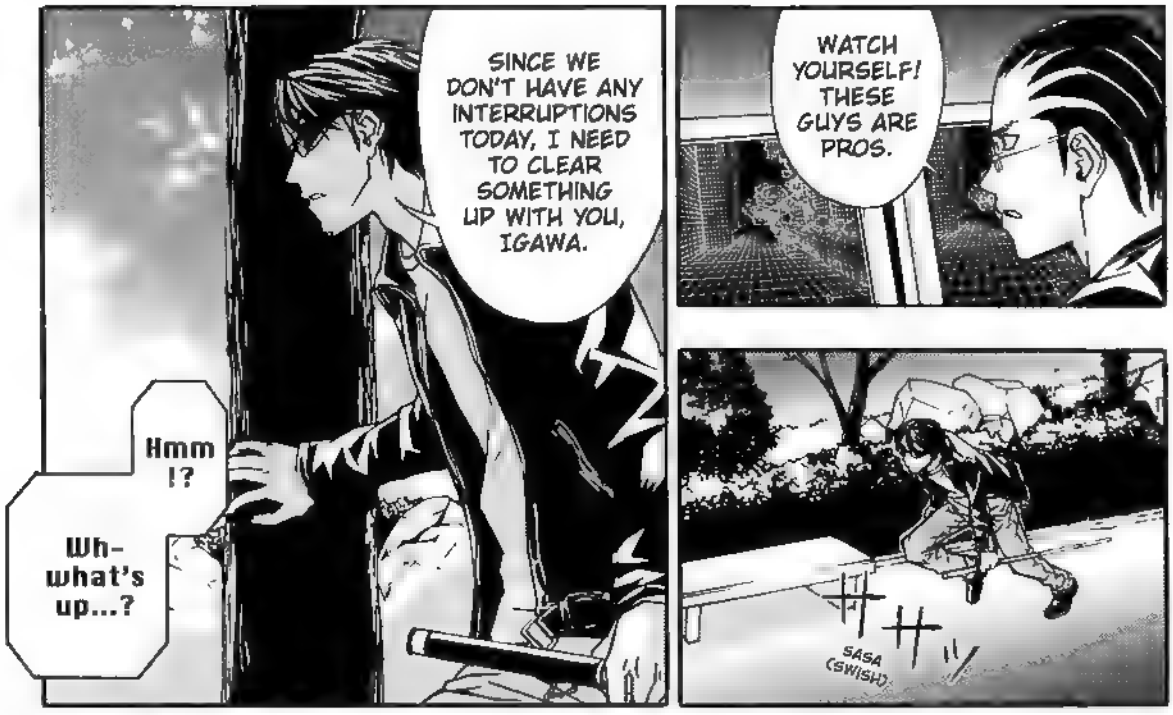
RRRR
RRR
IT'S ME.
I'VE GOT TO MAKE UP...
...FOR THIS TERRIBLE LOSS.
I knew you would make the smart decision.
Of course, if anyone finds out about this, your entire company will be flipped upside-down.
Have you prepared what we agreed upon?
YES...
GACHA (CLICK)
We do have a deal.
Heh heh!
AND YOU WON'T LET WORD OF THIS GET OUT?

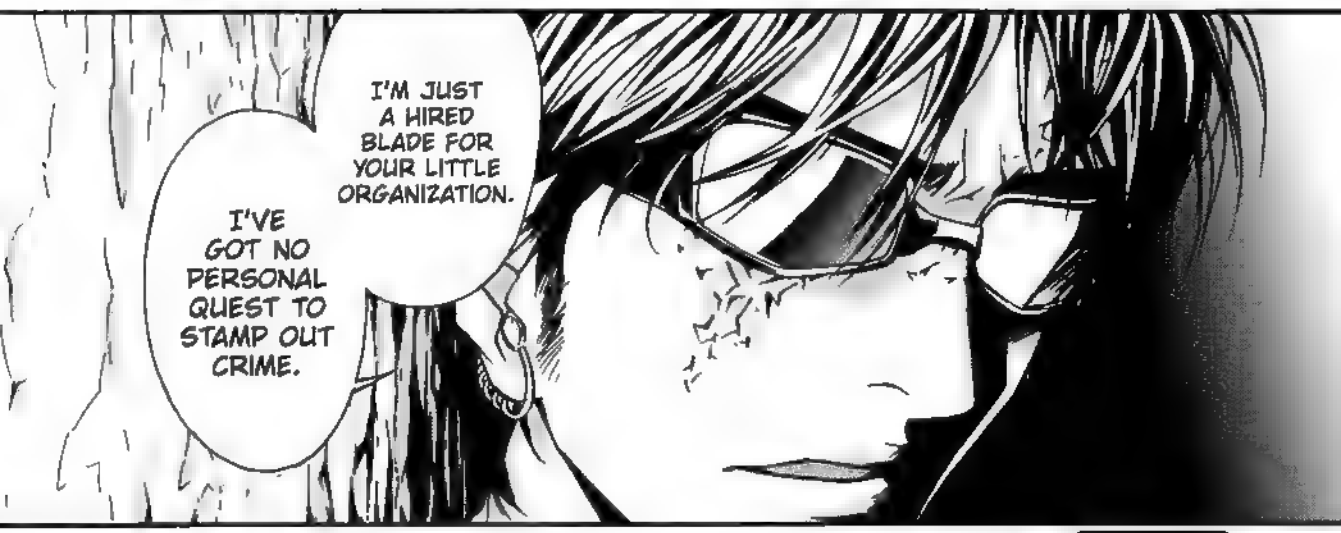
NO SIGNS OF RESIS-TANCE.
SNUCK UP FROM BEHIND AND SLIT THEIR THROATS...

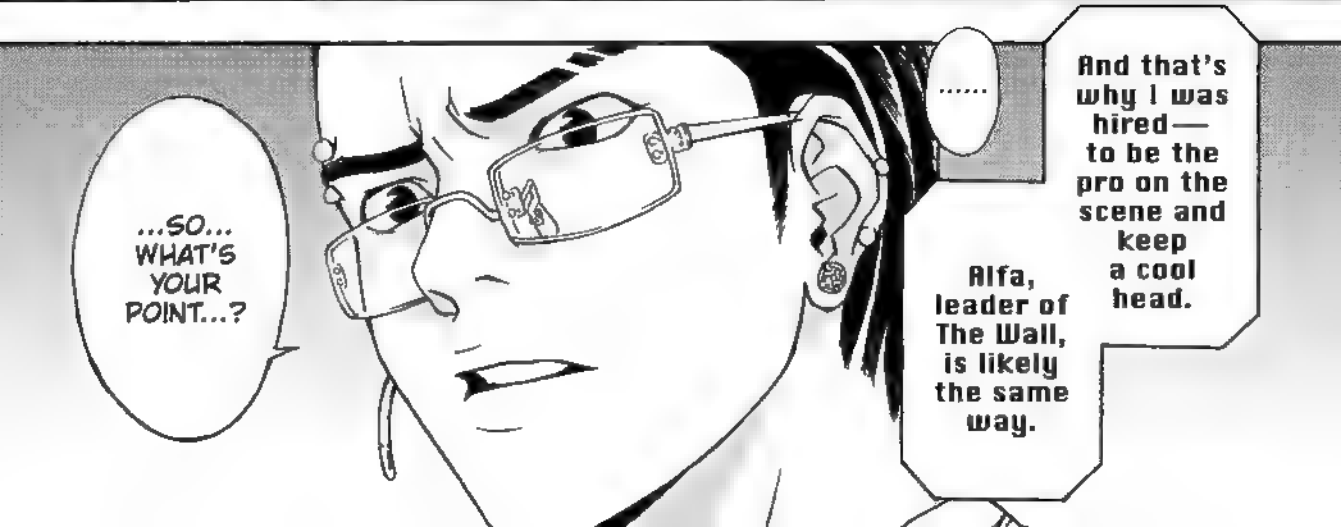
chapter 10

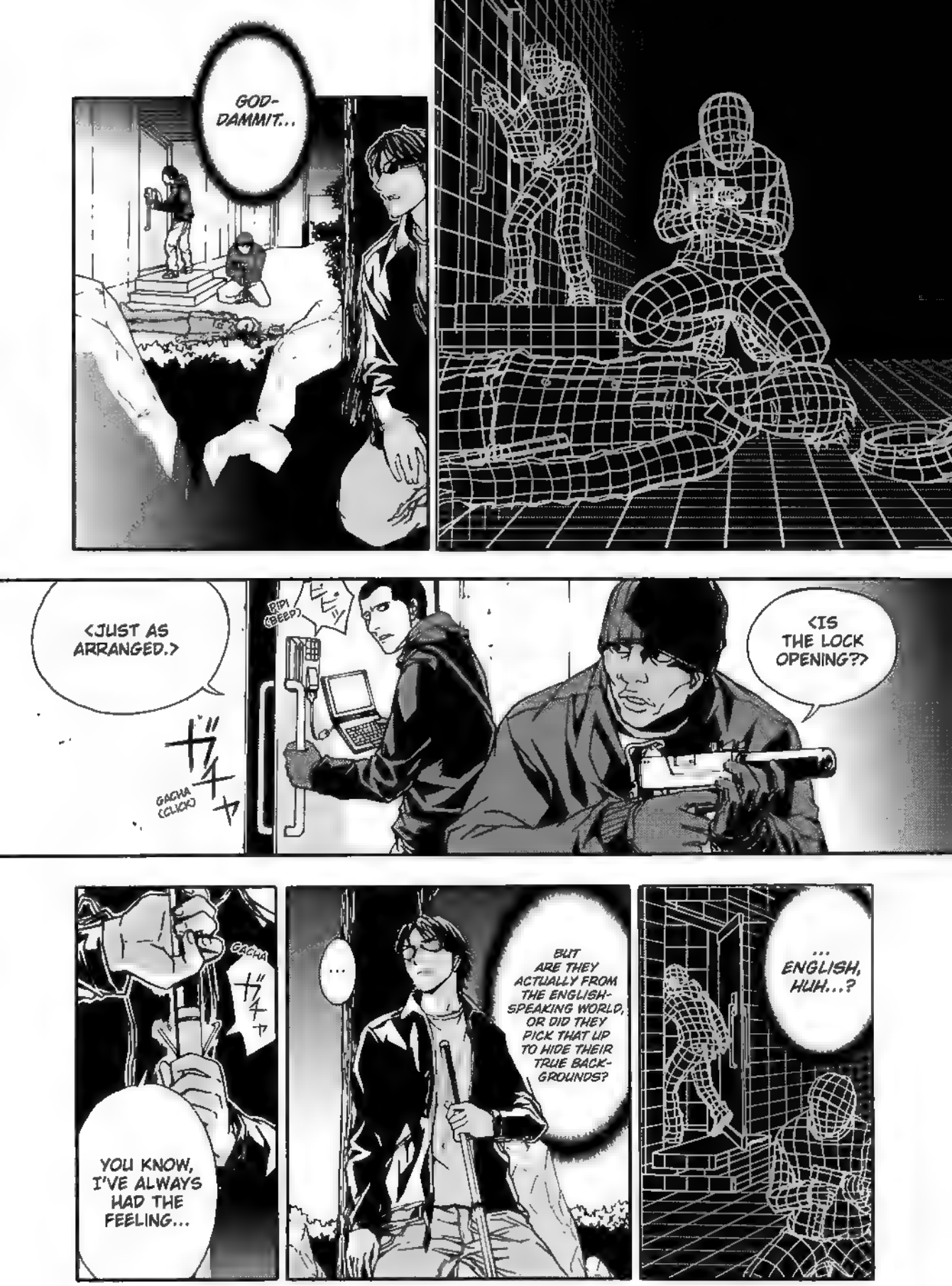
NO OTHER SIGNS OF DAMAGE OR VANDALISM INSIDE THE BUILDING.
ONE OTHER SECURITY GUARD WAS STABBED AND KILLED ON HIS PATROL.
IF YOU'RE THAT ADEPT AT THIS SORT OF INFILTRATION, YOU SHOULDN'T NEED TO RESORT TO KILLING!
...
THIS WAS THE ACT OF SOME-ONE VERY FAMILIAR WITH MURDER.
—LET ME BY...
...I HAVE TO SEE HIM!
?
FAMILY OF ONE OF THE VICTIMS ...?
HONEY!
HIDEO-SAN!!
ゴンッ
GON'
(SLAM)

SHIT!!
Ex Sound
What's going on!?
.....
THEY'VE ALREADY GONE INSIDE.
THAT WAS QUICK. THEY MUST HAVE A HANDLE ON THE LAYOUT ALREADY.
ZA CFSHID


SINCE WE DON'T HAVE ANY INTERRUPTIONS TODAY, I NEED TO CLEAR SOMETHING UP WITH YOU, IGAWA.
Hmm !?
Wh- what's up...?
WATCH YOURSELF! THESE GUYS ARE PROS.
SASA (SWISH)


I'M JUST A HIRED BLADE FOR YOUR LITTLE ORGANIZATION.
I'VE GOT NO PERSONAL QUEST TO STAMP OUT CRIME.


...SO... WHAT'S YOUR POINT...?
.....
Alfa, leader of The Wall, is likely the same way.
And that's why I was hired— to be the pro on the scene and keep a cool head.


GOD-DAMMIT...
<JUST AS ARRANGED.>
GACHA (CLICK)
PIPI (BEEP)
ビビッ
<IS THE LOCK OPENING?>
GACHA
YOU KNOW, I'VE ALWAYS HAD THE FEELING...
...
BUT ARE THEY ACTUALLY FROM THE ENGLISH-SPEAKING WORLD, OR DID THEY PICK THAT UP TO HIDE THEIR TRUE BACK-GROUNDS?
... ENGLISH, HUH...?

HUH?
KACHA (CLACK)
THIS AIN'T A CIRCLE OF FRIENDS, MAN.
YOU DON'T HAFTA WORRY ABOUT MY SAFETY CONSTANTLY.
...THAT YOU LACK CONVICTION.
SWUU (SHHP)
YOU GOTTA BE DECISIVE. IF I'M SCREWED, CUT THE DEAD WEIGHT AND GET THE HELL OUT.
KEEP IT COOL, PARTNER.
D-dude...

!?
DA (DASH)
TA (TEK)
TA
TA
DOGA (KAPOW)

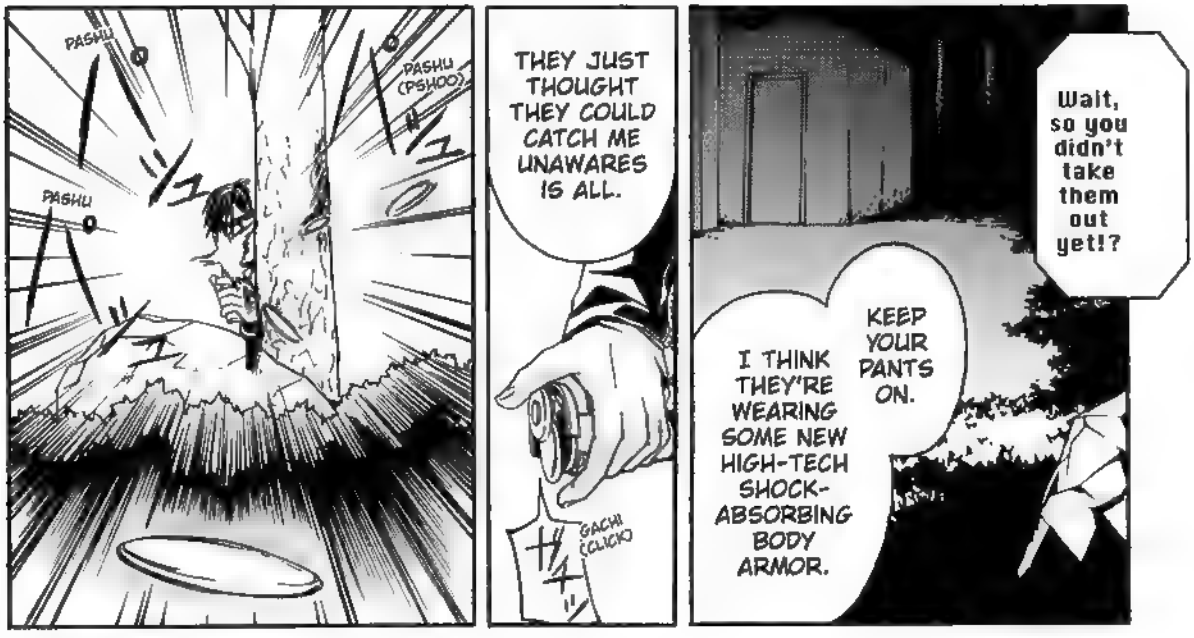
DOTA (WHUMP)
?
GOT 'IM!
JIR! (SCRAPE)
...THAT DIDN'T QUITE FEEL RIGHT...
...
What hap-pened !?
BA (LEAP)
BYU (SWISH)

BASHI (SMACK)
TA (TAT)
TA
TA
TA
DO (KICK)

TA
TA
TA
TA
TA
GA
CHAKO
!!

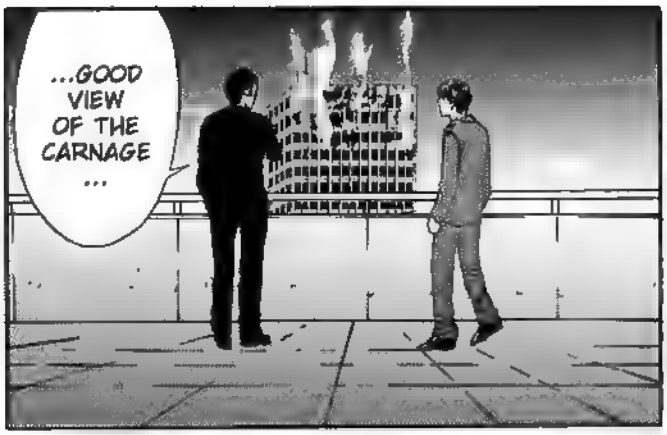
GACHA (CHAK)
GAGA (KAKAK)
BASU (BSHOO)
TATATATA
CHUN
CHUN (PEW)
CHUN
CHUN
SUU (SHU)

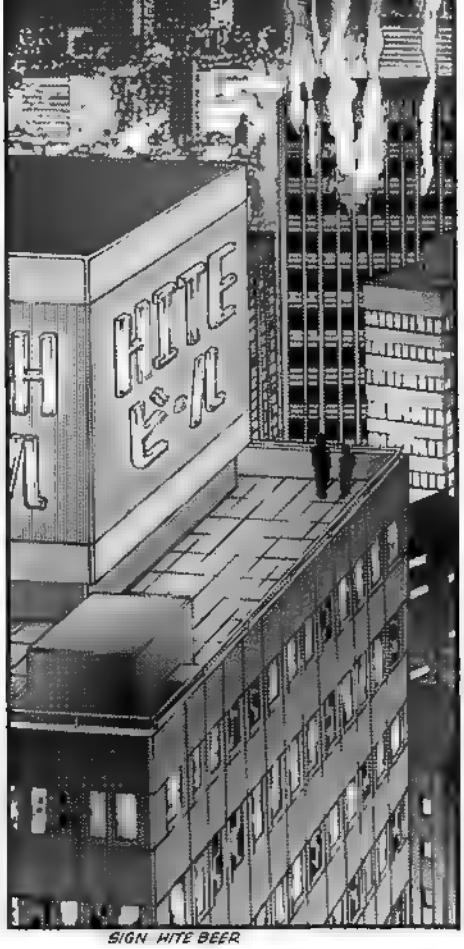
THESE ARE STILL HUMAN REFLEXES BEHIND THE TECHIE GOODS.
...NOT WHEN IT'S A STREAM OF AUTO-MATIC FIRE LIKE THAT, I CAN'T...
Can't you just knock all the bullets outta the air?
...GOTTA KEEP MY DISTANCE ...


PASHU
PASHU (PSHOO)
PASHU
THEY JUST THOUGHT THEY COULD CATCH ME UNAWARES IS ALL.
GACHI (CLICK)
Wait, so you didn't take them out yet!?
KEEP YOUR PANTS ON.
I THINK THEY'RE WEARING SOME NEW HIGH-TECH SHOCK-ABSORBING BODY ARMOR.

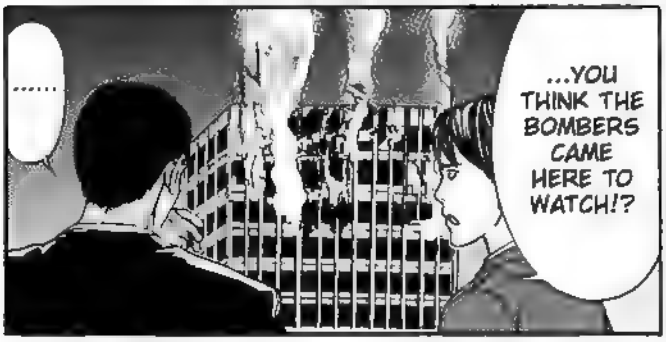
CAN YOU USE THAT HIGH-CURRENT MAGNETIC FIELD TO KNOCK OUT THE LIGHTS HERE?
BASU (BSHOO)
URGH!
GAGA (KAKOW)
CHUN
CHUN
CHUN (CHOOM)
KICHI (CLIK)
KICHI
KICHI
BASHA (SWOOSH)
UIIII (VWEEE)
...IT'LL CAUSE PERMANENT DAMAGE TO ANY OTHER ELECTRICAL CIRCUITS IN THE AREA.
Y-YEAH, I CAN, BUT IF I FIRE IT STRONG ENOUGH TO KILL THE LIGHTS...
IT'S AN EMERGENCY.
CAN'T LET THESE GUYS WALK FREE. IF THERE HAS TO BE DAMAGE, IT'S STILL TO EX SOLID. I'M CERTAINLY NOT GONNA SHED ANY TEARS OVER IT.

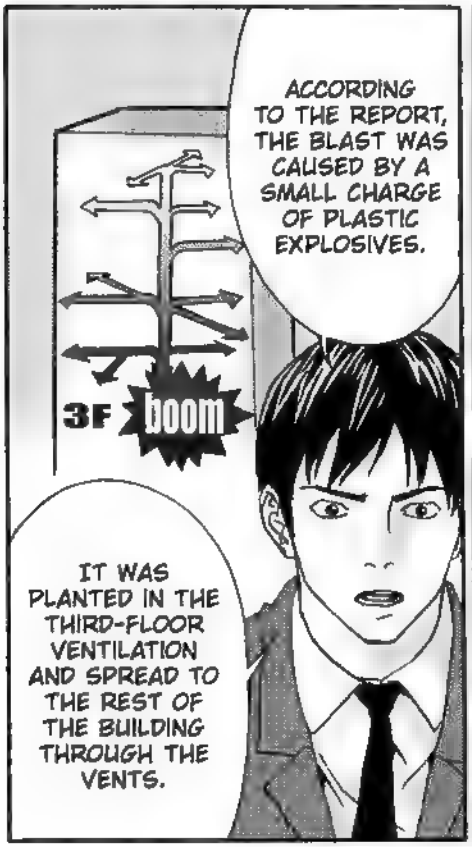
PA
(FLIK)
PA
!?
I DON'T CARE HOW USED TO NIGHT BATTLE YOU ARE ...
...DARK-NESS IS MY HOME TURF.
IF THE BLUNT SIDE OF MY BLADE WON'T WORK, I'LL NEED TO TAKE MORE PAINFUL MEASURES.



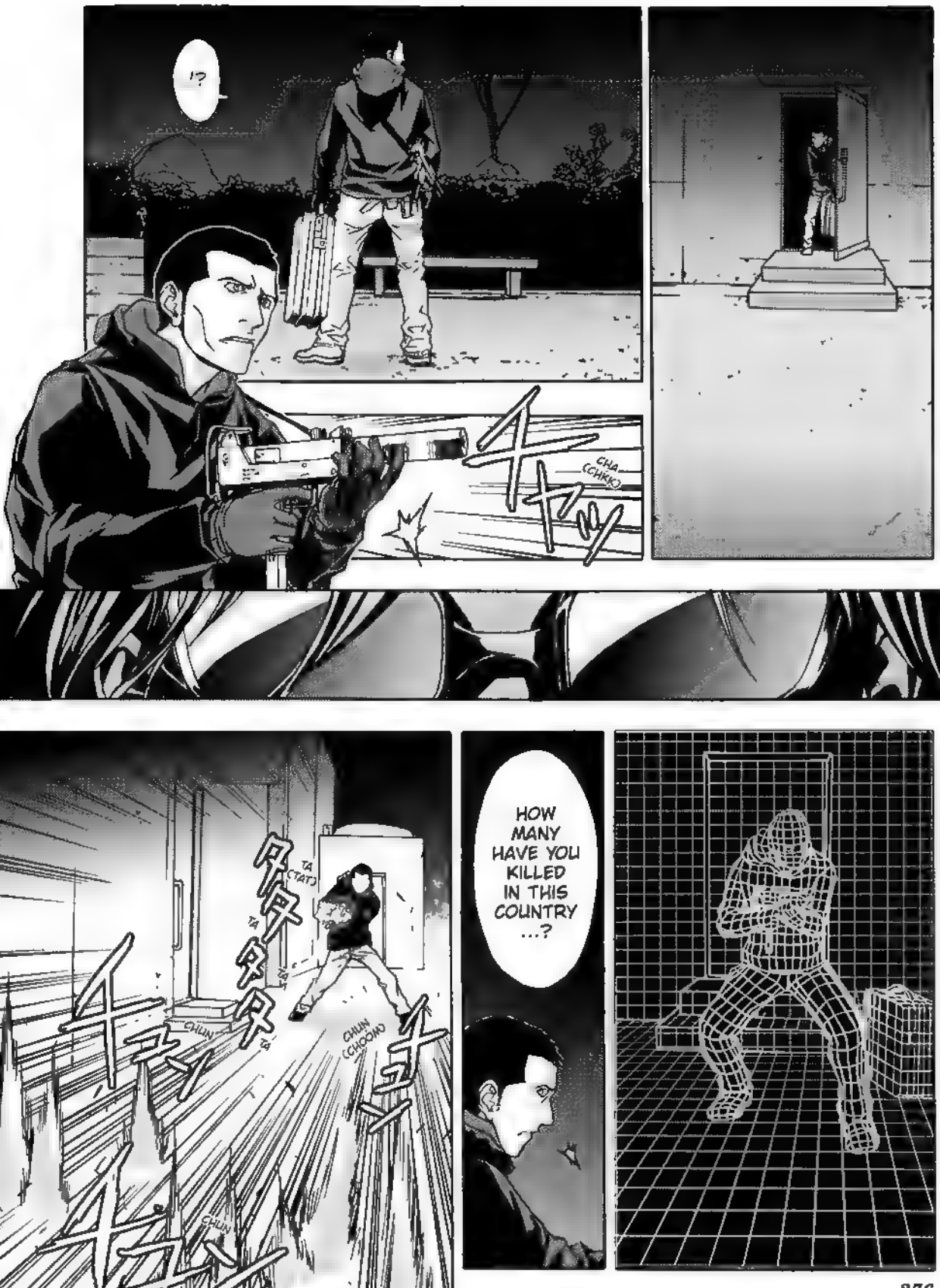


SIGN: HITE BEER




ACCORDING TO THE REPORT, THE BLAST WAS CAUSED BY A SMALL CHARGE OF PLASTIC EXPLOSIVES.
3F
boom
IT WAS PLANTED IN THE THIRD-FLOOR VENTILATION AND SPREAD TO THE REST OF THE BUILDING THROUGH THE VENTS.

WEIRD...
HUH ?
FORTUNATELY, TWO NIGHT GUARDS SUSTAINED MINOR INJURIES, BUT THERE WERE NO CASUALTIES.
...SO WHY WOULD THEY SET OFF THE EXPLOSIVES IN THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT WHEN NOBODY WOULD BE THERE?
THEY KILLED THREE DEFENSELESS SECURITY GUARDS JUST TO CONFIRM THE DAMAGE TO THE BUILDING...
?
...HIGH POSSIBILITY THAT THIS WAS AN INTERNATIONAL CRIME.
GUESS I'LL RUN IT BY INTERPOL...
HUH !?
...MAYBE THIS ISN'T QUITE AS SIMPLE AS IT SEEMS...


!?
CHA (CHKK)
TA (TAT)
CHUN
CHUN (CHOOM)
HOW MANY HAVE YOU KILLED IN THIS COUNTRY ...?

NO...
HOW MANY HAVE YOU HARMED IN YOUR LIFE?

RUN FOR IT!

TCH

HE'S A MONSTER !!

NOT SO FAST!
SUPA (GNIK)
BA (PH..P)
!

ヒュッ
HYU
ザッ
ZA
ザッ
ZA
ギュッ
GYU
!
...IS THAT IT...?

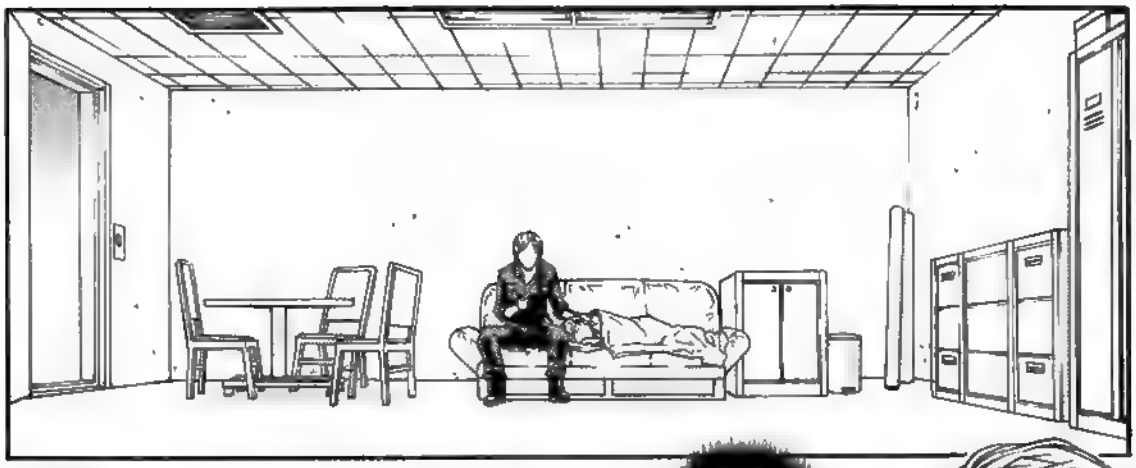
DOGA (KAPOW)
NGH!!
GA (HOP)
HYU (WSHH)
ZUDADA (SKID)

PUSHUUU (PSHHT)
!!
AAAAAH!!
DOSA (THUMP)
SHUZA (SLASH)
I HAVE NO IDEA WHAT'S IN THIS THING...
GACHA (CLICK)
NNNGH!!

ALFA !?
GET AWAY FROM HIM, BLADE!
...BUT I HAVE TO ASK, DID YOU REALLY THINK YOU'D GET AWAY LUGGING SOMETHING THIS HEAVY?
ドガ
DOGA (CLONK)
.....
GACHI (CHOMP)
NOW, I'VE GOT PLENTY OF QUESTIONS, BUT FIRST I WANT TO KNOW WHAT YOU'RE AFTER.
DON (BOOM)

GACHI
PARA
PARA (SPRINKLE)
!!?
DOSA
DOSA (THMP)
WHA...?
DOOOOO (WHOOOSH)
DOOON (BOOM)

WE'RE PULLING OUT.
PEOPLE WILL BE COMING.
...TALK ABOUT DEDI-CATED...
THEY'RE ALREADY TOO LATE...
HMM ?
AW, HELL!!
TA (TIAP)
TA
TA
GU (T.UG)



BUT... CINDY...

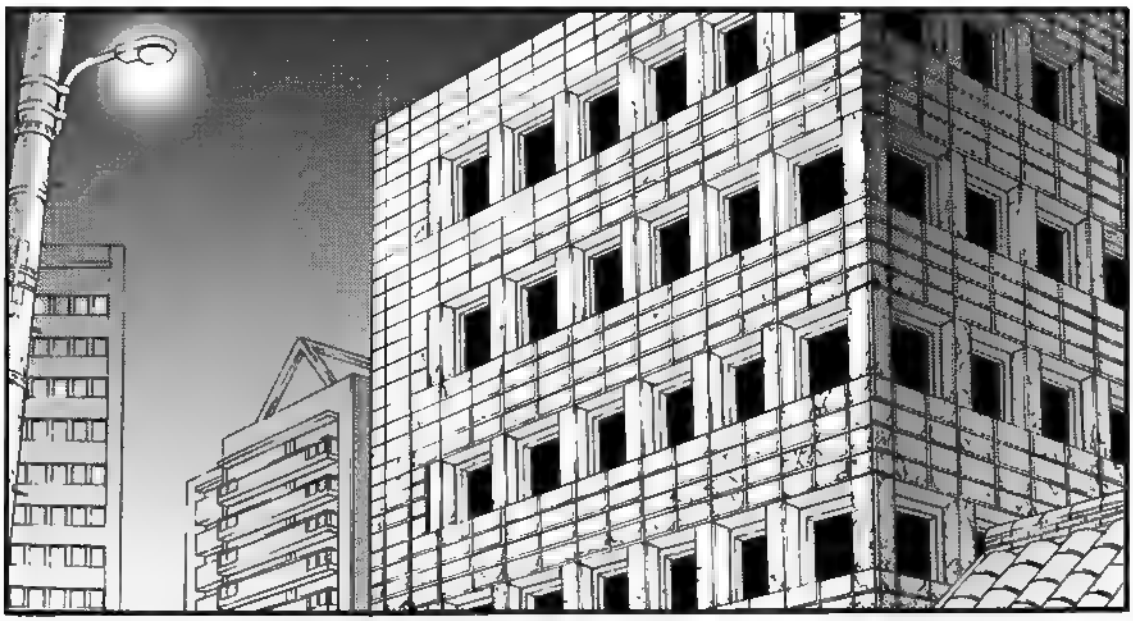
...BLADE'S RIGHT. THERE'S NO WAY WE CAN BRING THIS INNOCENT LITTLE GIRL INTO OUR WAR.

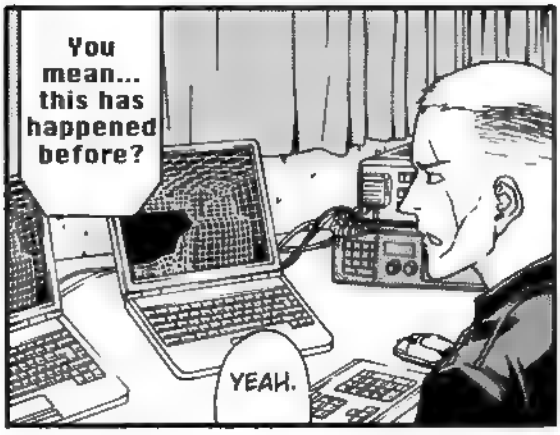
WE CAN'T LET THE TERRORISTS WIN.
GYU (SQUEEZE)

chapter 11

chapter 11

ブオオオ
BUOOO (VRMMM)
Ex Solid
ガチャ (CLICK)
WHERE'S ALFA?
NOT HERE.
HE'S CONNECTED REMOTELY.
I CAN'T SAY I THINK MUCH OF YOUR HOBBY OF SITTING BACK AND OBSERVING, ALFA.
HUH?
UH, YEAH.
MONITOR ALL OF EX SOLID'S CALLS. CAN YOU DO THAT?




You mean... this has happened before?
YEAH.

THEY HAVE BOMBS IMPLANTED IN THEIR TEETH.
IF THEY'RE ABOUT TO BE CAUGHT, THEY CAN DISFIGURE THEIR FACES AS THEY DIE.

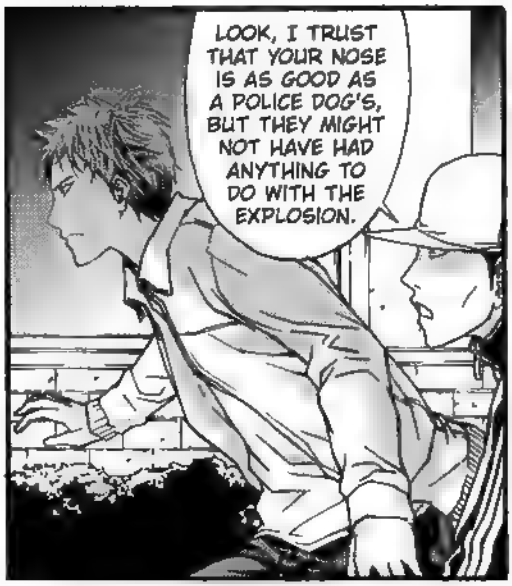
DON'T BUST MY BALLS.
WE WERE TRYING TO AVOID ANY UNNECES-SARY INJURIES.

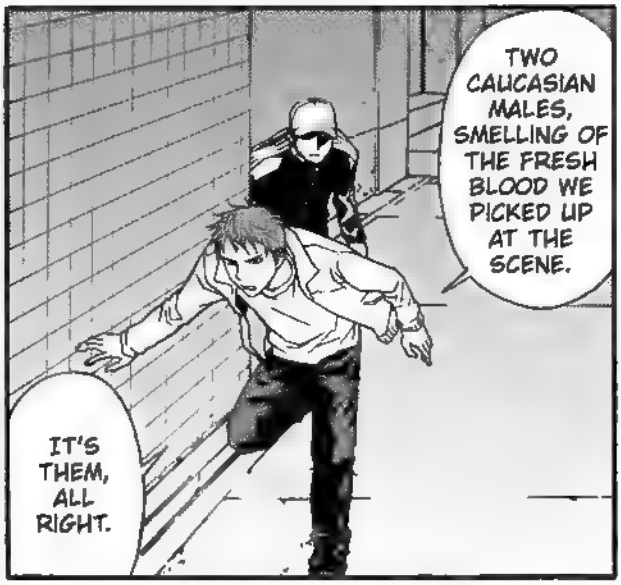
YOU KNOW MUCH ABOUT 'EM?
Three incidents in Europe, two in North America. One of our team members was knocked out of commission already.
The way they tried to maximize casualties in their final moments fits the bill for the group we're chasing.
Yeah...
NOTHING TOO SPECIFIC. THEY'RE VERY GOOD AT COVERING THEIR TRACKS.
ARE YOU IN?
.....
WE'LL NEED TO TRADE INFORMATION TO WORK OUT HOW EX SOLID FIGURES INTO THIS. MEET UP WITH US.
WE NEED YOU TO BE FAMILIAR WITH OUR AGENTS.
IF IT GIVES ME A CHANCE TO DEAL OUT SOME PUNISHMENT, I'M WITH YOU.
THEIR METHODS ARE RUBBING ME THE WRONG WAY.

THEN MAYBE YOU CAN INPUT OUR MEMBERS' PHYSICAL DATA INTO THOSE EYES OF YOURS.
...
We don't want any unfortunate friendly-fire incidents.
DUNNO HOW YOU EXPECT ME TO TELL YOUR FACES APART...
I'm just giving you a hard time.
OH...
...SORRY...
EX SOLID JUST SENT A REPORT TO THE POLICE.
SOUNDS GOOD...

...THEY WERE PROBABLY DOING A SEARCH FOR SOMETHING FIRST.
GIVES 'EM TIME TO COVER UP A FEW MESSY SECRETS TOO...
THAT'S A MAJOR DELAY FOR AN INCIDENT OF THIS PROFILE. PRETTY LEISURELY REPORT, IF YOU ASK ME.
.....

YOU SURE THAT'S THEM, FOX?
...YEAH...


LOOK, I TRUST THAT YOUR NOSE IS AS GOOD AS A POLICE DOG'S, BUT THEY MIGHT NOT HAVE HAD ANYTHING TO DO WITH THE EXPLOSION.


TWO CAUCASIAN MALES, SMELLING OF THE FRESH BLOOD WE PICKED UP AT THE SCENE.
IT'S THEM, ALL RIGHT.

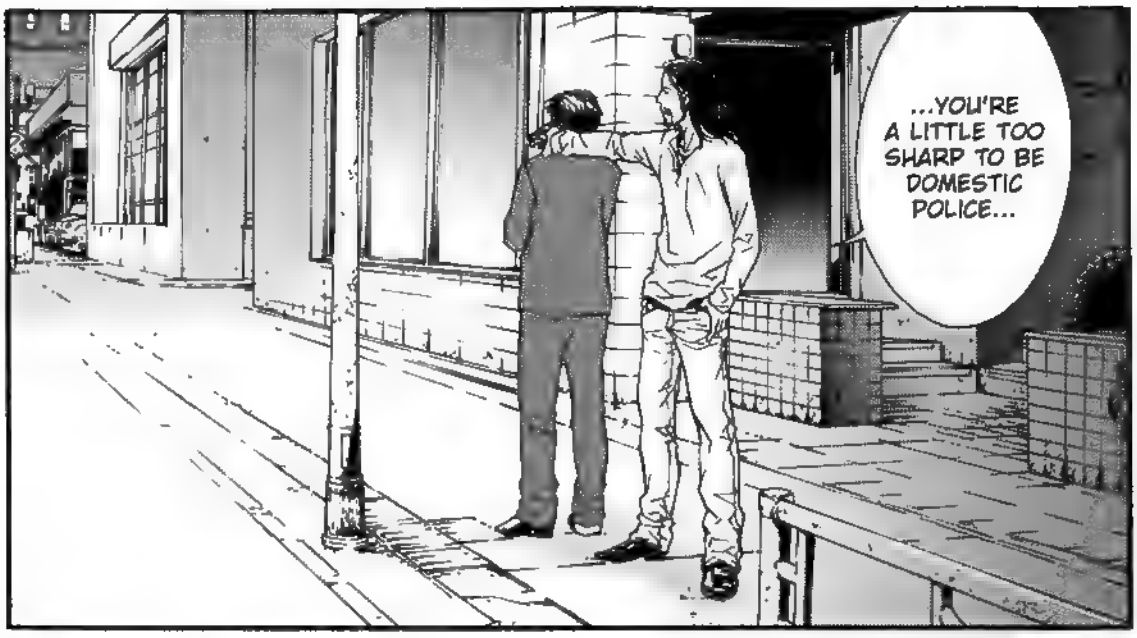
THE PROBLEM IS, HOW LONG CAN WE TRAIL THEM WITH SO LITTLE FOOT TRAFFIC AROUND?
DO WE JUST SWOOP IN TO APPREHEND THEM?

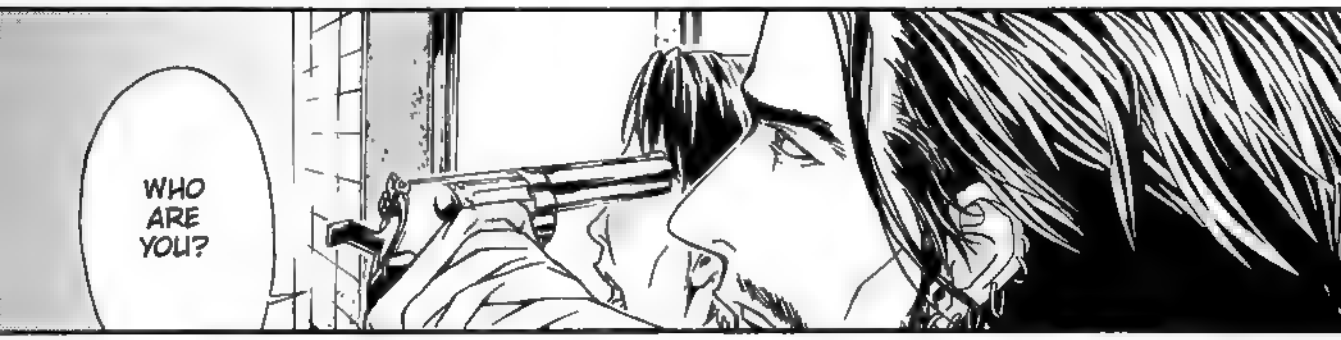
SA-
(SWISH)

IT'S A VERY STRONG, THICK STENCH, INDIA. THEY'VE COMMITTED MURDER TONIGHT.
WE CAN'T LET THEM GO.

THE SCENT SPLITS HERE...
...QUICK REACTION... I DON'T FEEL GOOD ABOUT TAKING THEM ON WITH OUR BASIC INVESTIGATIVE EQUIPMENT.
ITA (TAK)
!

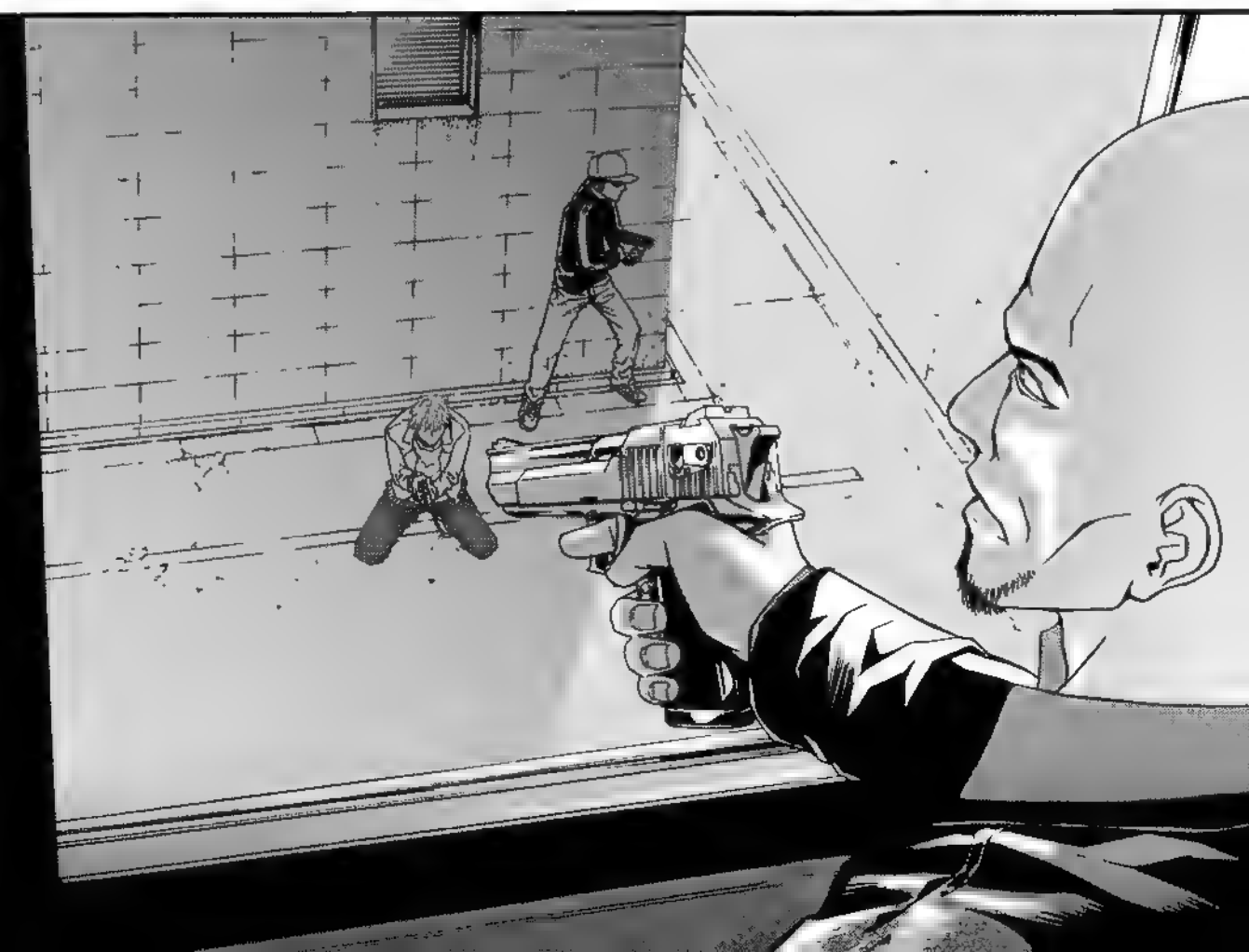
.....H-
HELP...
M-M-
ME...
...CLEVER BASTARD...
KNEW HE WAS BEING TAILED, SO HE WAITED TO ACT UNTIL HE COULD FIND SOMEONE TO TAKE HOSTAGE.


...YOU'RE A LITTLE TOO SHARP TO BE DOMESTIC POLICE...


WHO ARE YOU?

.....

BE CAREFUL.
FOXTROT REPORT-ING IN.
BALDY'S GOTTA BE HIDING SOME-WHERE.
RE-QUESTING BACKUP.
FOXTROT REPORT-ING...

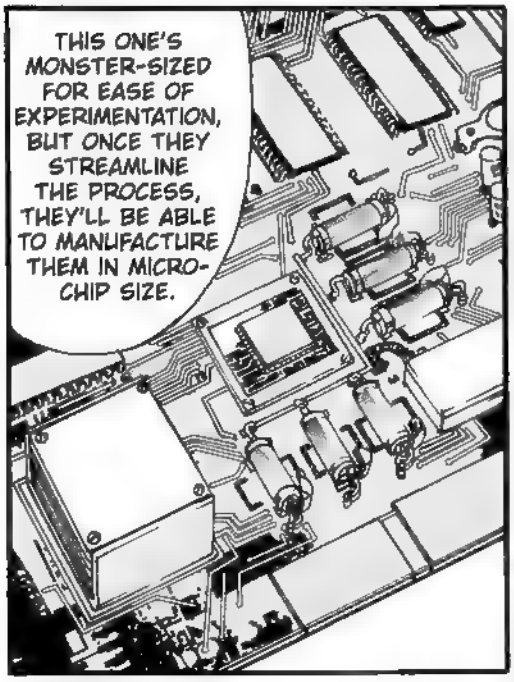


ZZZ...
ZZZ...

ZZZ...
...GUESS THE MAN NEEDS HIS BEAUTY SLEEP...

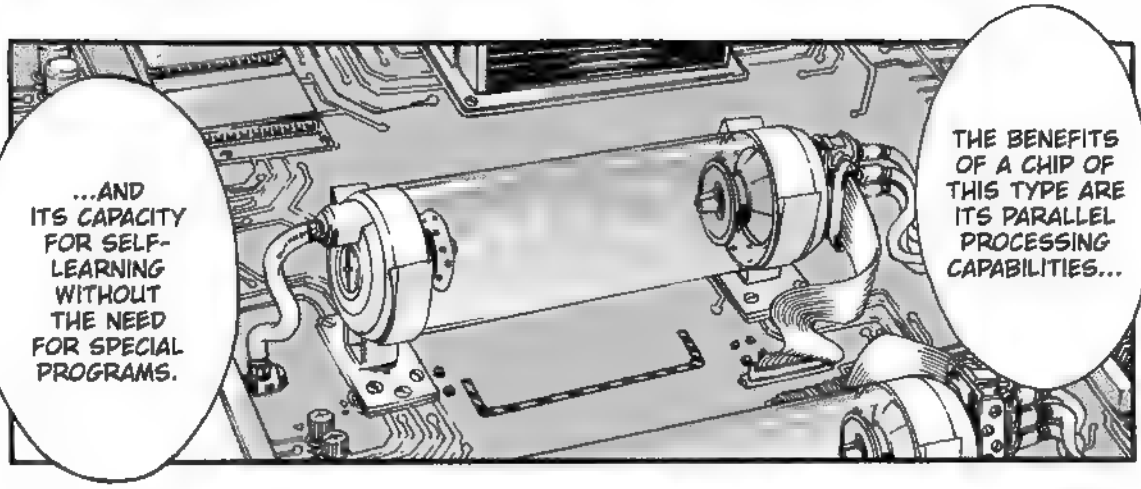
THUG LIFE
THE EYESIGHT TIRES HIM OUT QUICKLY.
TAKING REGULAR NAPS KEEPS HIM READY TO ACT WHENEVER HE NEEDS TO...OR SO HE SAYS.

...A BIO-COMPUTER ...?

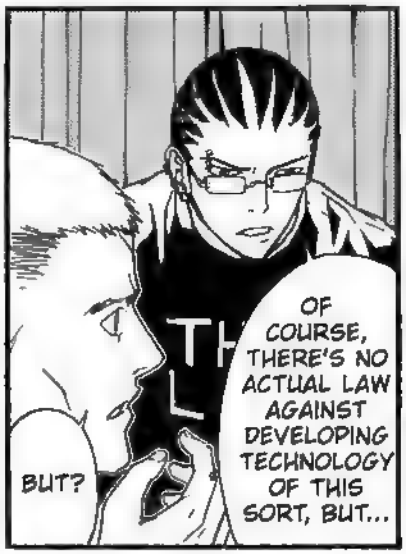

THIS ONE'S MONSTER-SIZED FOR EASE OF EXPERIMENTATION, BUT ONCE THEY STREAMLINE THE PROCESS, THEY'LL BE ABLE TO MANUFACTURE THEM IN MICRO-CHIP SIZE.

.....

TO BE PRECISE, IT'S A BIOCHIP TO BE INSTALLED IN A COMPUTER. THERE ARE BIONIC PARTS BUILT INTO THE INTEGRATED CIRCUITS.
CAN'T BE ANYTHING ELSE...
THUG LIFE


THE BENEFITS OF A CHIP OF THIS TYPE ARE ITS PARALLEL PROCESSING CAPABILITIES...
...AND ITS CAPACITY FOR SELF-LEARNING WITHOUT THE NEED FOR SPECIAL PROGRAMS.

EX SOLID'S SO DESPERATE TO SEE RESULTS...


OF COURSE, THERE'S NO ACTUAL LAW AGAINST DEVELOPING TECHNOLOGY OF THIS SORT, BUT...
BUT?

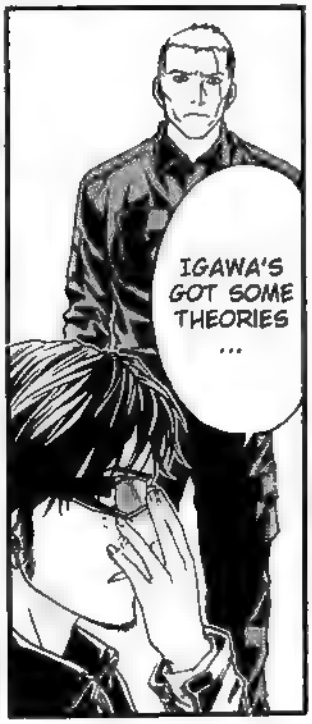
THIS IS THE CUTTING EDGE OF TECHNOL-OGY TODAY.
HMM ...
THUG LIFE

...THAT THEY'RE EVEN EXPLORING ...
...CLONING AND HUMAN EXPERIMENTA-TION. REAL NASTY STUFF.

...WHAT ...!?
HE WAS AWAKE...
.....!
THERE'S NO PROOF OF ANY OF THIS...
...BUT BASED ON THE MATERIALS THEY'RE IMPORTING, PERSONNEL THEY'RE MOVING, AND OTHER TESTIMONY WE'VE GLEANED THROUGH THE NETWORK, THE PICTURE'S GETTING CLEARER BY THE DAY.
THUG LIFE

.....!!

RIGHT.
I THINK THEY WANTED TO STUDY HER BRAIN STRUCTURE...

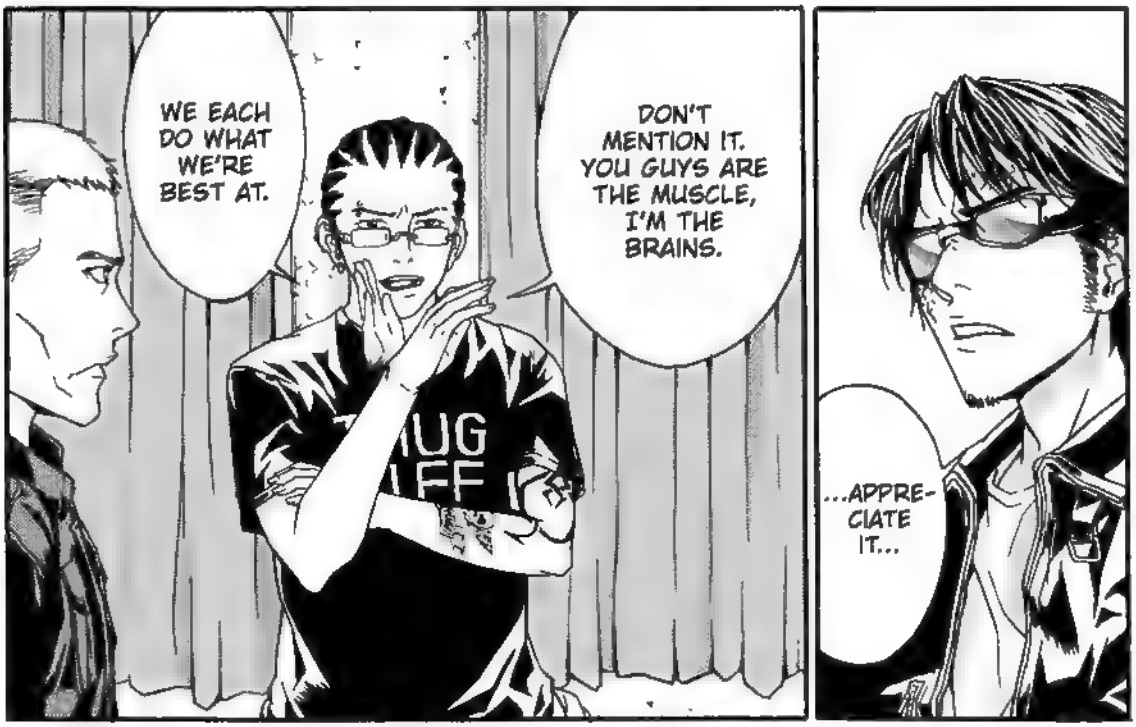

IGAWA'S GOT SOME THEORIES ...

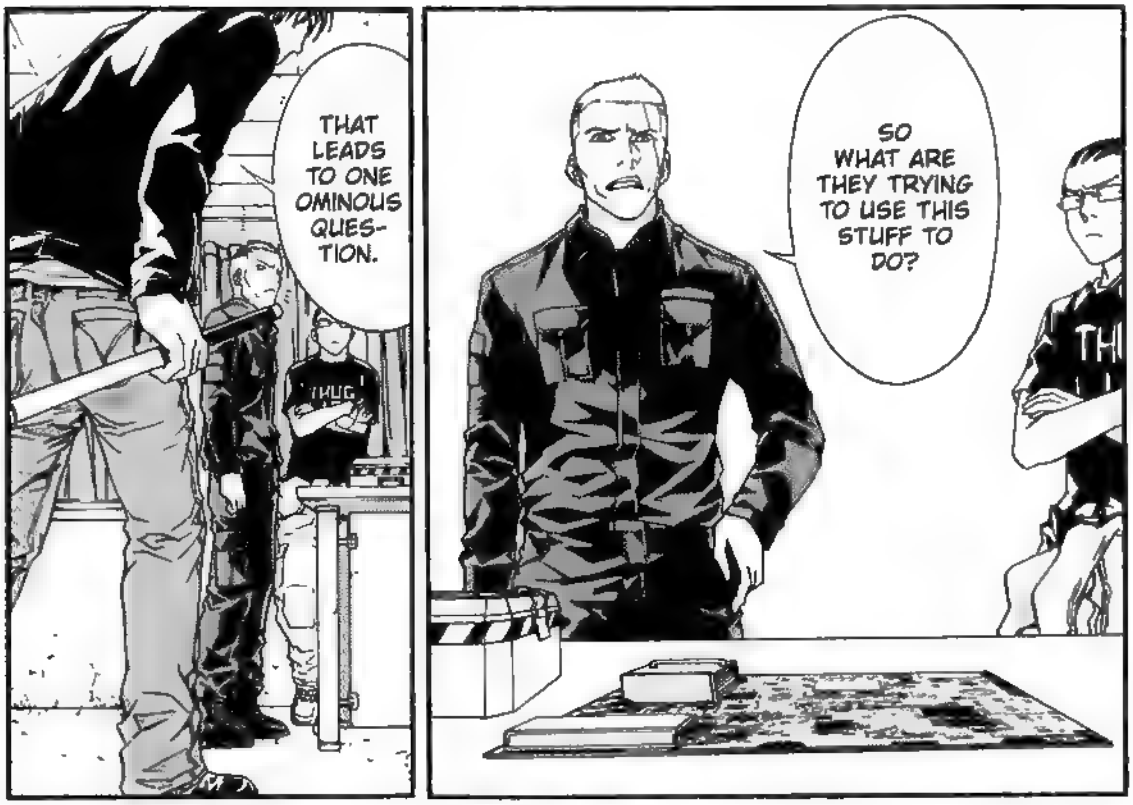
WE WERE EN ROUTE TO INVESTIGATE WHEN WE GOT WRAPPED UP IN THE GIRL'S ABDUCTION.

MEAN-ING...

THE THOUGHT TURNS MY STOMACH...
SO THEY'D KIDNAP AN INNOCENT GIRL JUST TO USE HER LIKE A TOOL?
SHE'D HAVE BEEN THE PERFECT TEST SUBJECT.
...TO SEE IF THEY COULD REPRODUCE THAT KIND OF PREDICTIVE CAPABILITY IN THEIR COMPUTER SYSTEMS.
GIRL CARD
.....
As for whether or not this would actually be possible...

...IT SEEMS UNCLEAR FROM WHAT OUR SCIENTIST FRIEND TELLS US.
THE PROBLEM WITH THESE SPECIALISTS IS THAT THEY SEEM TO FIND IT IMPOSSIBLE TO EXPLAIN THINGS TO AMATEURS IN ANY KIND OF WAY THAT MAKES SENSE.
SINCE WE DON'T HAVE A BETTER PLAN, I'LL TRY TO STUDY UP A BIT AND ASK HIM AGAIN LATER.


WE EACH DO WHAT WE'RE BEST AT.
DON'T MENTION IT. YOU GUYS ARE THE MUSCLE, I'M THE BRAINS.
...APPRE-CIATE IT...


THAT LEADS TO ONE OMINOUS QUES-TION.
SO WHAT ARE THEY TRYING TO USE THIS STUFF TO DO?

ARE THE MEN YOU'RE AFTER REALLY JUST YOUR AVERAGE TERRORISTS?

IF YOU GO BY THE DICTIONARY DEFINITION OF "TERRORISM," THERE ARE PLENTY OF THINGS ABOUT THIS OPERATION THAT DON'T ADD UP.
TO TELL THE TRUTH, THIS IS NOTHING MORE THAN SPECULATION ON OUR PART, WHICH IS WHY I DIDN'T BRING IT UP UNTIL NOW. BUT WE BELIEVE THAT—
.....
THU
YOU'RE PRETTY SHARP...

Re-questing backup.
?
Foxtrot, reporting in.
Foxtrot, report-ing...
-BEEP-
-BEEP-
GIMME A SITREP!

BLAM!
BLAM!
WHA...?
.....
COME IN, FOX-TROT!
.....
THUG LIFE
FOX-TROT!

Until
Death
do us
Part

ZUGYUN (BLAM)
AAGH!!
DON (BLAM)
DON
DON

GASHA (KSHH)
GASHA
BARIN (CRAKK)
BA (SHHP)

FOX!!
SHIT! IF WE GIVE THEM ANY SPACE, THE HOSTAGE IS FUCKED!
PING
!
KAN (CLANK)
KA (FLASH)

ダッ
DA
(DAGH)
GYA
(SCREE)
GYA
GYA
GYA
ドガッ
DOKA
(THUD)

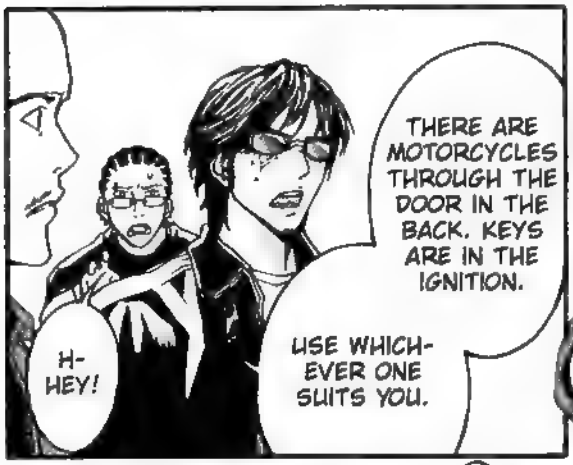
chapter 12

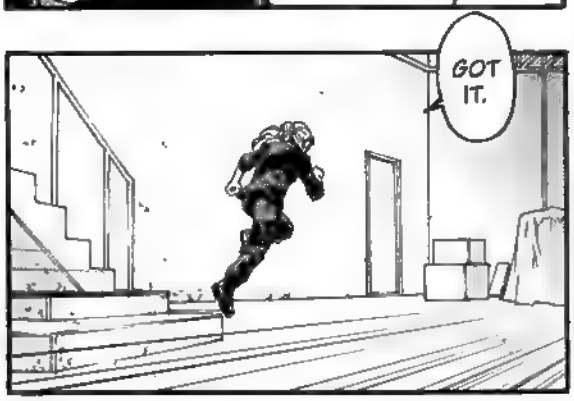
?
WHAT IS IT?
YOU HAVE TO HURRY.
YOU CAN STILL MAKE IT IN TIME!

BLAM!
BLAM!
COME IN, FOX-TROT!
FOX-TROT!
TH
LI
.....
Come in!

I'll go!

ZAWA (MURMUR)
CAP-TAIN...
...


THERE ARE MOTORCYCLES THROUGH THE DOOR IN THE BACK. KEYS ARE IN THE IGNITION.
USE WHICH-EVER ONE SUITS YOU.
H-HEY!


GOT IT.

I'M THE CLOSEST TO THE SCENE. DO WE HAVE ANY WHEELS?
DA (DASH)
DA
DA

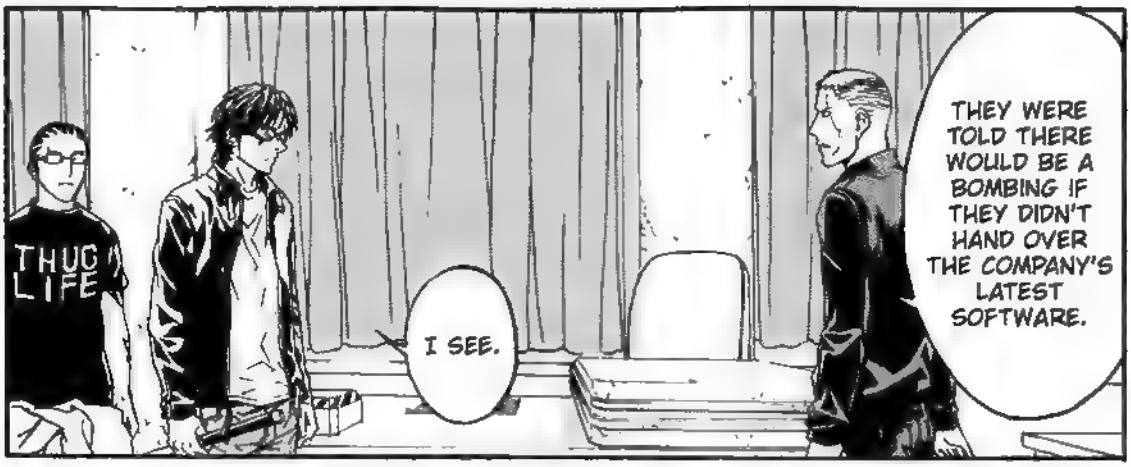
ROGER.
MOVE OUT!

CHAR-LIE!
TAKE THE REST OF THE SQUAD.

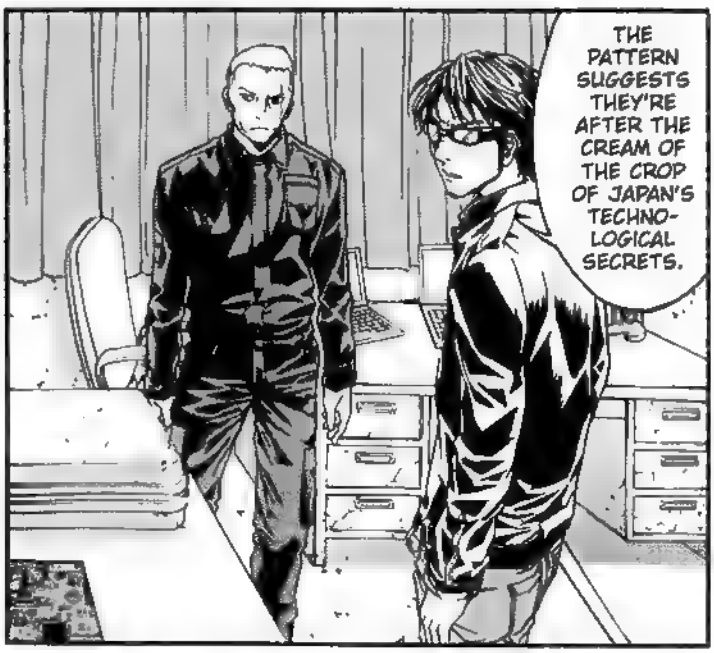
.....
YOU'RE STAYING PUT?

WE HAD ANOTHER BOMB THREAT AND EXTORTION ATTEMPT TODAY, THIS TIME ON NAKANO ELECTRON-ICS.
?

THEY'RE THE BEST MEN AND WOMEN I'VE EVER WORKED WITH.
MY PRESENCE WON'T MAKE OR BREAK THE OPERATION.


THUG LIFE
I SEE.
THEY WERE TOLD THERE WOULD BE A BOMBING IF THEY DIDN'T HAND OVER THE COMPANY'S LATEST SOFTWARE.

WHETHER IT'S RESELLING THOSE SECRETS FOR OPERATING FUNDS OR WHAT, WE DON'T KNOW WHAT THEIR ULTIMATE AIMS ARE.

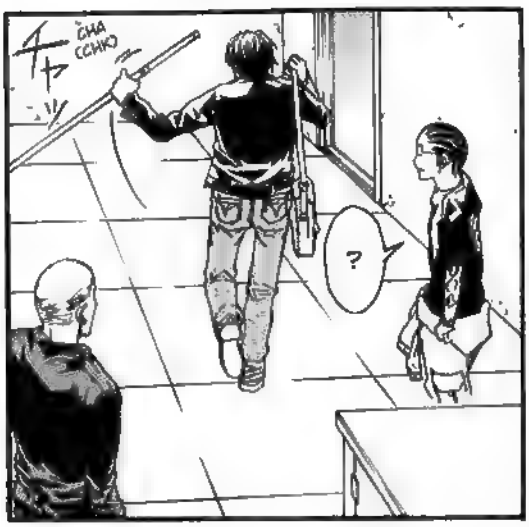

THE PATTERN SUGGESTS THEY'RE AFTER THE CREAM OF THE CROP OF JAPAN'S TECHNO-LOGICAL SECRETS.

AND THAT'S WHAT MAKES THEM DIFFERENT FROM YOUR RUN-OF-THE-MILL TERRORISTS.

ガチャ
GACHA (CLICK)
ギュッ
GYU (TUG)
グイッ
GUI (THUP)
ZA (VRRR)
ﾅﾞ
ｯﾝ

GAGAGAGAGA (VMMM)
LIIIIN (VWEE)
BLOOOO (VRRRRRR)
LIIIIN (VWEEE)
DON (BOOM)

...AND THE KEY TO THE ENTIRE MATTER IS IN OUR HANDS.
WELL, WE'VE GOT ONE USEFUL PIECE OF INTEL...
SO... WHAT NOW?
YOU CATCH MY DRIFT.
NIYA (SMIRK)
NO POINT IN NOT MAKING USE OF THEM...
.....
...THE HELL ARE THEY TALKING ABOUT ...?


ЗНА
ССНКО
?

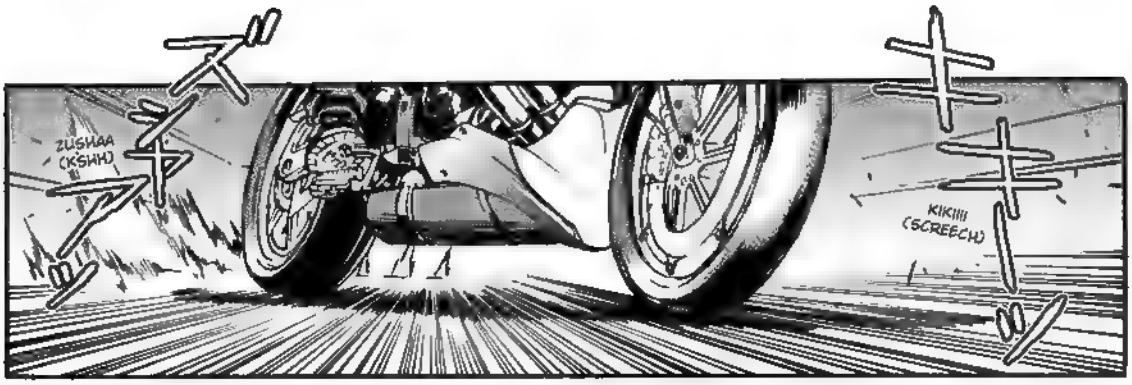
.....
UH... HELLO?
ТА
СТЕКО

NAKANO ELECTRONICS IS GOING TO NEED ALL THE MANPOWER.
I'LL LEAVE THAT TO YOU.
BUT EX SOLID WILL INVOLVE MORE RISK.
GASA (RUSTLE)

ON THE WAY.
THUG LIFE

WHAT'S THE PLAN?

?
THUG LIFE
THEY'RE GONNA LIE IN WAIT, AND I'LL TAKE THE OFFENSIVE.
ARE YOU GONNA EXPLAIN ANY OF THIS?


ZUSHAA (KSHH)
KIKIIII (SCREECH)

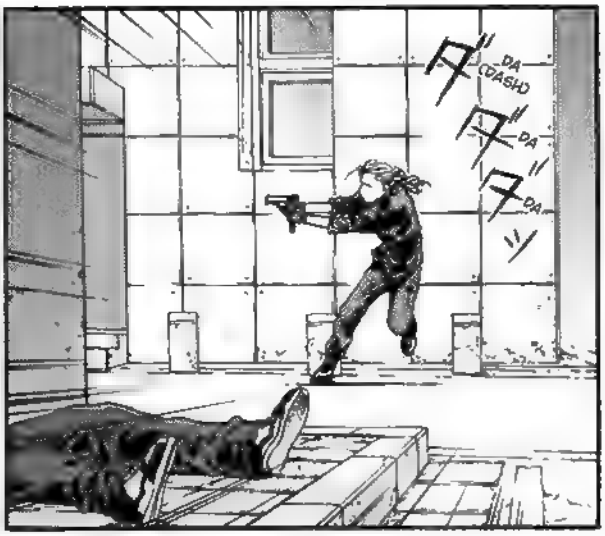
ROGER.
Foxtrot is three blocks ahead.

BUON (VRMMM)

DO (PTT)
DO
DO
DO
WHERE ARE THEY?

ブオオオオ
BUOOOO (VRRR)

FOX!


DA
DASHO
DA
DA

...ARE YOU ALL RIGHT ...!?

HE TOSSED A FLASH GRENADE. HASN'T RESPONDED TO RADIO SINCE.
WHERE'S INDIA?

SIERRA...
HEY...

FUAN (WEEOOO)
FUAN
FUAN
DOOR: POLICE DEPT
WE GOTTA PULL OUT.
POLICE ARE MOVING IN.
REALLY? OUT HERE ON THE STREET?
MUST'VE BEEN A BAD SITUATION.
YOU CAN STILL MAKE IT IN TIME!
NO...
N-NO, WAIT!
I'M GONNA FIND HIM.
YOU HOOK UP WITH THE REINFORCE-MENTS.

Wait for backup, Sierra!
FUAN (TEE-GOD)
FUAN
FUAN
FUAN
FUAN
THIS CALLS FOR HASTE.
SORRY, CAPTAIN.
FUAN
FUAN
FUAN
KA (CHOP)
FUAN
FUAN
VISUAL ON INDIA AND THE HOSTAGE!

CAVALRY'S HERE!!
TA (TAT)
TA
TA
TA
TA
?!!
CHA (CHAK)

FUAN
FUAN
FUAN
FUAN (WEEOOO)
DON (BLAM)
DON
FUAN
FUAN
FUAN
FUAN
DON
TA
TA
TA
TA
ZUGA (KPOW)
BABA (LEAP)
KYUN (PEW)
KYUN
TA (TAT)
TA
TA
TA
GACHA (CHCHK)
GASHA (CHLIK)

...HEY... SIERRA...
FUAN
FUAN
FUAN
FUAN
BA
FUAN
FUAN
FUAN
FUAN
HOSTAGE IS STILL HANGIN' IN THERE, BUT HE'S BEEN SHOT THROUGH THE LEG.
JUST IN TIME.
FUAN
FUAN
FUAN
FUAN
YOU'RE ALIVE!

I WOULD HAVE GOTTEN AWAY FINE, IF IT WASN'T FOR THE HOSTAGE.
WELL, WE'RE GETTING AWAY NOW!
EVEN TERRORISTS KNOW EXACTLY WHAT TO DO WITH A FLASH GRENADE THESE DAYS.
MAN, WHAT A STATE.
NO. YOU GO.
FUAN
FUAN
FUAN
FUAN (WEEOOO)
FUAN
FUAN
FUAN
FUAN
FUAN
YOU DON'T EVEN WANNA BE SEEN HERE. IT'LL ONLY THROW THE INVESTIGATION INTO CHAOS.
IF THE POLICE GOT THEIR HANDS ON YOU, IT WOULD BE A TERRIBLE BLOW TO THE TEAM.

GARAN (CLUNK)
WHO AM I? JUST ANOTHER DRUNKEN TOURIST.
...THAT BOOZE WILL ONLY MAKE YOUR WOUNDS WORSE...
AT LEAST I'LL CATCH SOME R&R WITH THE COPS.
FUAN
FUAN
FUAN
FUAN
=GULP=
=GULP=
Pull out, Sierra.
...
FUAN
FUAN
FUAN
FUAN
ROGER.
YOU WON'T BE ABLE TO EVADE THE POLICE CARRYING INDIA.
NOW'S THE TIME FOR DAMAGE CONTROL. PULL OUT!
AND ONE MORE THING...

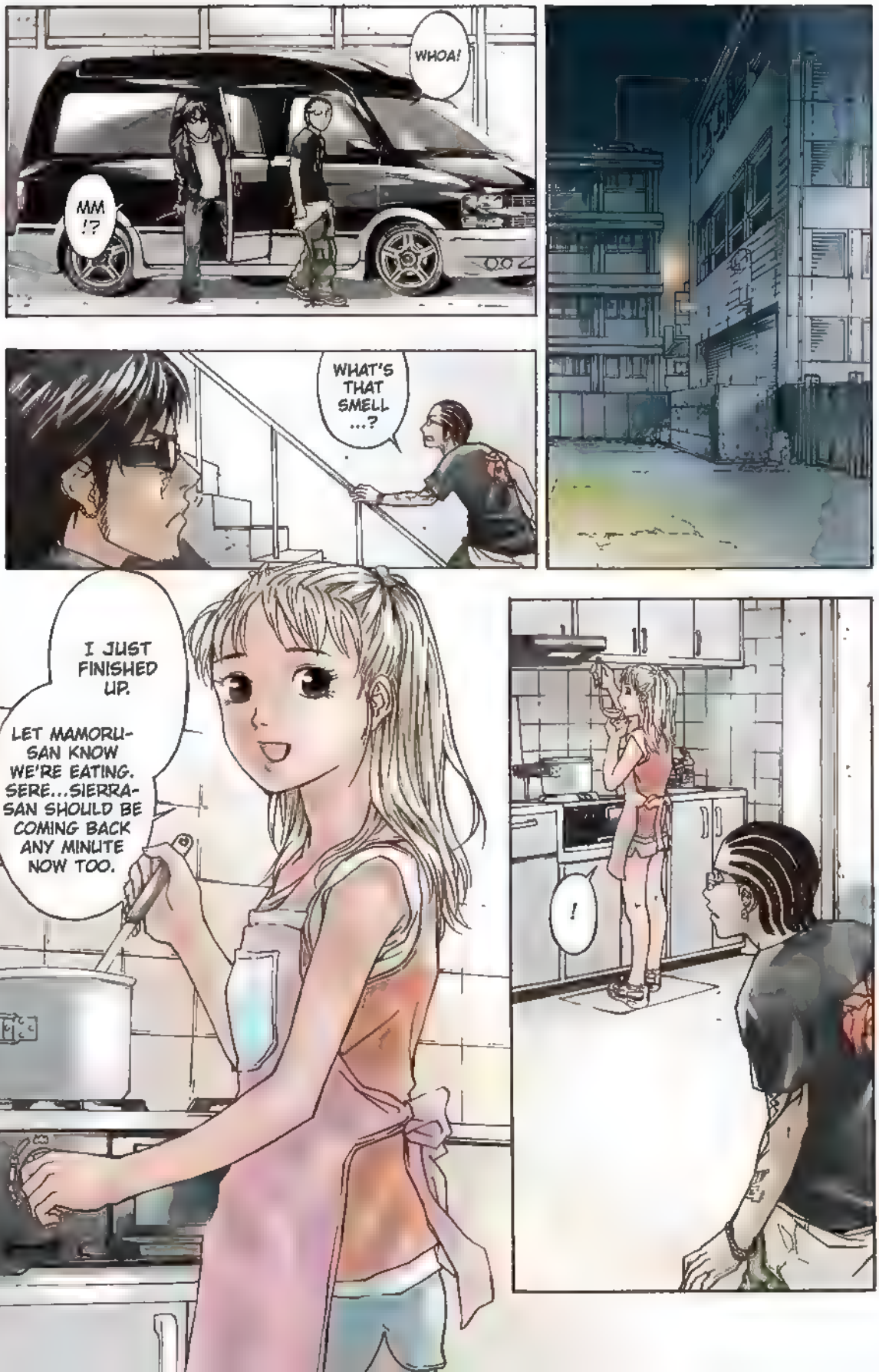
GU (FLICK)
.....
CAPTAIN SAYS "JOB WELL DONE!"
UGH, THIS IS KILLIN' ME...
DO THE JAPANESE POLICE ALWAYS TAKE THIS LONG?
FUAN (WEEOOO)
FUAN
FUAN
GACHA (CLICK)
KIKII (SCREECH)
DAKA
DAKA (STOMP)
DAKA

I'M GONNA BLEED TO DEATH OUT HERE...
THE FACT THAT THE HOSTAGE TACTIC WORKED ...
...MEANS EITHER THEY'RE DOMESTIC POLICE, OR...
...WHAT'S THE NAME FOR THEIR SPECIAL FORCES? S.A.T.?

UM, SIR...
WE JUST GOT THE LATEST REPORT IN...
HMM ...
WE HAVEN'T STIRRED UP ENOUGH SHIT TO GET THE POLICE ON OUR TAIL.
THIS ISN'T LIKE THE USUAL RESISTANCE WE SEE.
ガチャッ
GAGYA (CLICK)
(BUOOO (VRRRM))
オオオ
WHAT?
THE ATTEMPT TO EXTRACT EX SOLID'S BIOCHIP FAILED!?

CHA
CCHIKK

Until
Death
do us
Part


WHOA!
MM !?
WHAT'S THAT SMELL ...?
I JUST FINISHED UP.
LET MAMORU-SAN KNOW WE'RE EATING. SERE...SIERRA-SAN SHOULD BE COMING BACK ANY MINUTE NOW TOO.
!

chapter 13

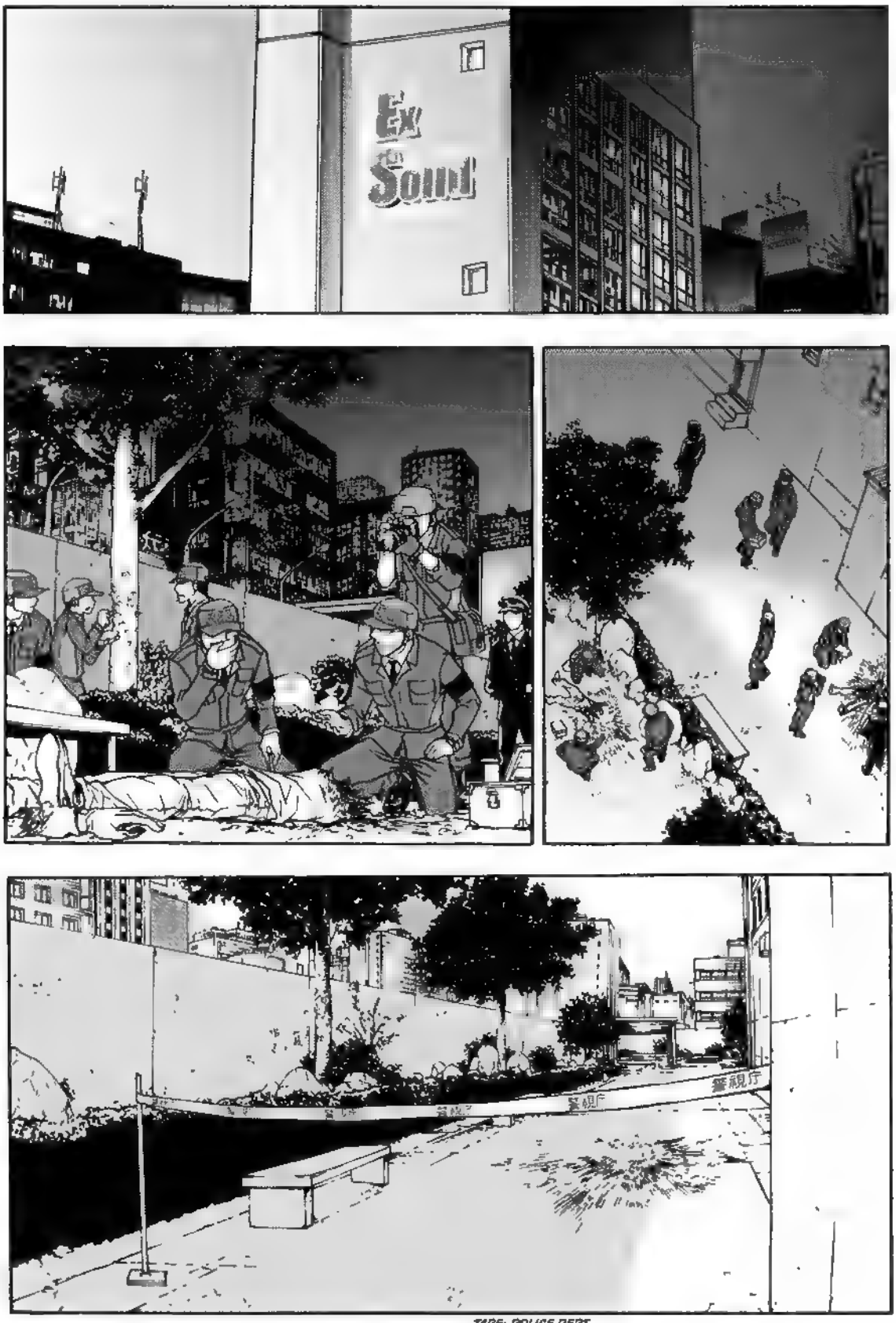
chapter 13

Until
Death
do us
Part

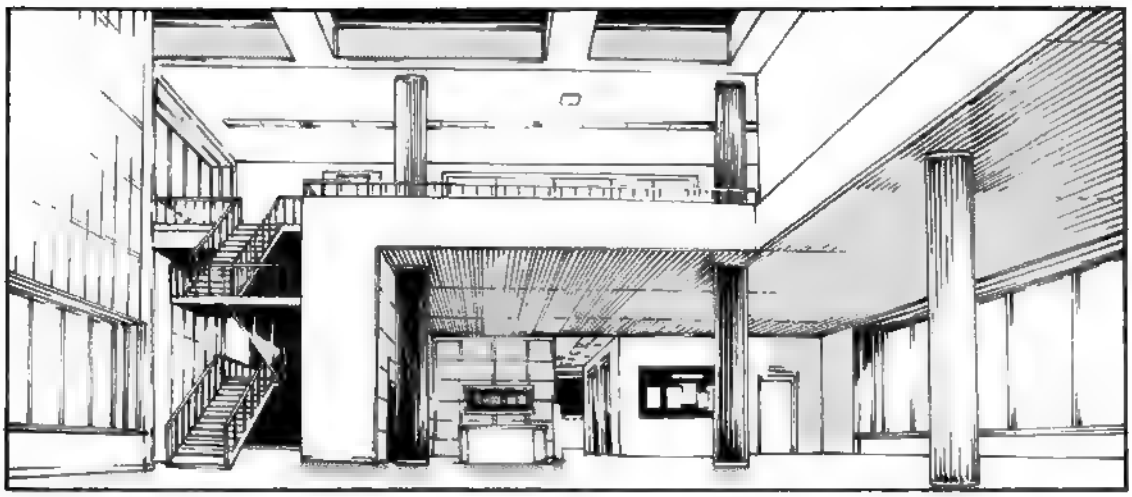
OHH.
IT'S PRETTY BASIC. I JUST THREW TOGETHER WHATEVER WE HAD...
...
UH, OKAY ...
HEY, WELCOME BACK.
...OOH, SOME-THING SMELLS GOOD.
NO, HE'S RIGHT.
YOU DON'T HAVE TO EXAGGER-ATE!
HA HA...
WOW, THIS IS INCREDIBLE! TASTES GREAT.

.....
NOTHING SPECIAL.
BOSO (MUTTER)
PORO (PLOP)
.....
HOW IS IT?
MAMORU!
CAN'T YOU TALK SOME SENSE INTO HIM?
?
WHAT? I DIDN'T SAY IT WAS BAD.

I'M GETTING USED TO HIS DELIVERY.
.....
I'VE BEEN WORKING WITH HIM FOR OVER A WEEK NOW.
"TASTES LIKE YOU PICKED THIS OUTTA THE TRASH."
PFFT!
KNOW WHAT HE SAID WHEN IT WAS MY TURN TO COOK?
...CUT ME SOME SLACK, IGAWA.
HA HA HA!
THAT'S JUST HOW HE IS.
HA HA HA!



TAPE: POLICE DEPT.



KO
KO

YOU'RE LOOKING TIRED. LONG DAY?
!?

.....
GACHA (CLICK)

I PUT OUT AN ORDER THAT NO KAKUHOUKAI MEMBERS BE ALLOWED IN HERE!
RELAX ...
AH, RIGHT. FOR SOME REASON WE HAVEN'T FIGURED OUT YET, ABOUT 20% OF THE COMPANY'S LINES HAVE BEEN KNOCKED OUT.
WE'VE BEEN WORKING ON IT.
DIDN'T HAVE A CHOICE. THE LINE WAS DOWN, DIRECTOR YOSHI-KAWA.

ALL WE HAD TO DO WAS HAND OVER THE SECRET PROTOTYPE, AND YET SOMEHOW THE POLICE HAVE GOTTEN INVOLVED!
SO...WHAT HAPPENED?
...A CLUSTER-FUCK, THAT'S WHAT...
LOOK, WE'RE JUST LOCAL GANGSTERS. WE'RE NO MATCH FOR INTERNATIONAL TERRORISTS.
NEED I REMIND YOU WHOSE IDEA IT WAS TO SIMPLY ACQUIESCE TO THEIR DEMANDS!?
WHAT THE HELL IS GOING ON!?

AND THIS THIRD PARTY GOT ITS HANDS ON THE THING THAT WAS SUPPOSED TO GO TO THE TERRORISTS.
KURU (SPIN)
BASED ON THE CIRCUM-STANCES ...
...I'D SAY THERE'S A THIRD PARTY RUNNING INTERFER-ENCE HERE.
...WELL, WHERE THE HELL DID THE INFO LEAK...?
THERE'S ONLY ONE PERSON WHO COULD PULL THIS OFF.
KACHI (CLICK)
KACHI
I HAVE AN IDEA WHO DID THIS.
ARE YOU SURE, KOMURA?
IT'S THE SAME GUY WHO STOLE HARUKA TOOYAMA...

IT SEEMS SO. THAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN HIS PLAN ALL ALONG.
WHAT!?
GET IT BACK!!
DAN (SLAM)
DO WHATEVER IT TAKES!! THAT PRODUCT ISN'T READY TO BE MADE PUBLIC!!
YOU MEAN HE KNOWS ABOUT OUR RESEARCH AND IS TRYING TO SABOTAGE IT!?

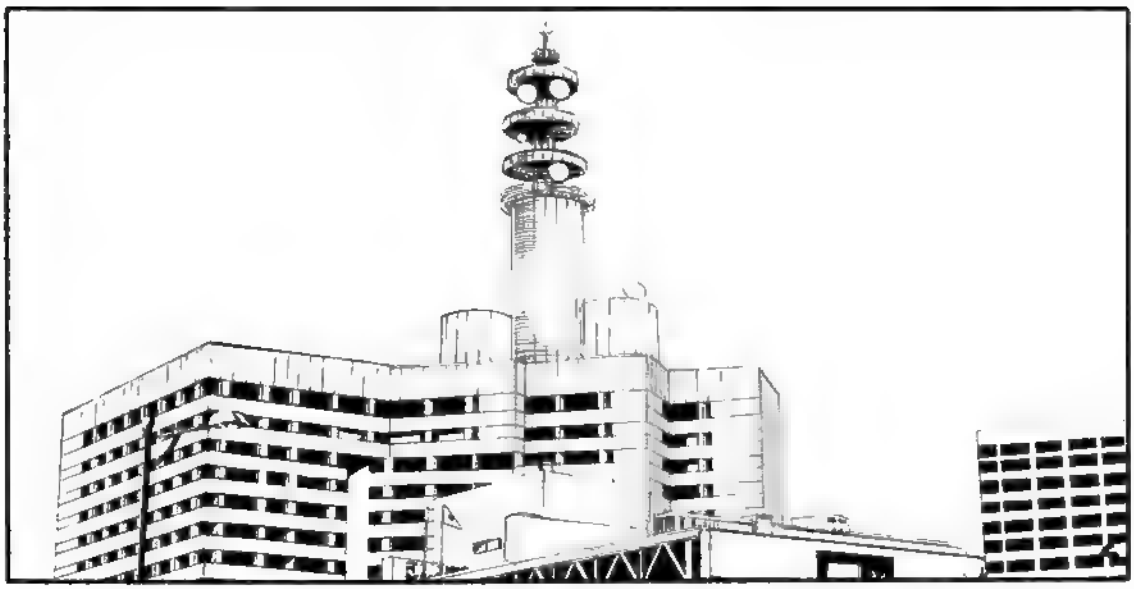
...LEAVE IT TO ME...

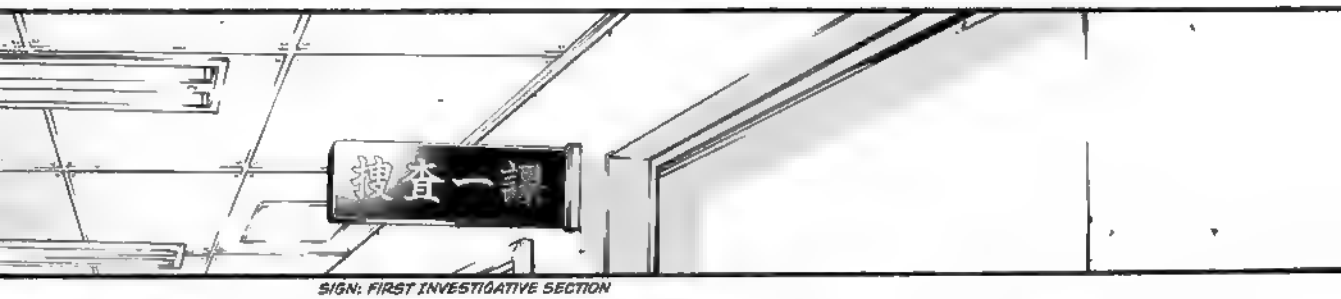
THIS MORNING'S NEWS DIDN'T MENTION ANYTHING ABOUT OFFICERS BEING SHOT...
...MR. TURUS.
SHIBUYA WARD, TOKYO EMBASSY TO THE REPUBLIC OF GALBOA
.....
THIS IS BECOMING... TIRESOME.
...WHICH WOULD MEAN *THEY* ARE INTERFERING AGAIN...
BUBUBU
BUBUBUBU

That you, Komura ...?
PROFESSOR TURUS...
I'LL DEMAND ANOTHER TRANSACTION, AND THEY'LL HAVE TO THROW IN SOME EXTRA CASH AS WELL.
IN THAT CASE, EVERY-THING'S FINE.
BUT IF YOU INSIST, FEEL FREE TO DO IT YOUR WAY.
NOW THAT'S KICKING THEM WHEN THEY'RE DOWN.
IT'S NOT ANYTHING UNDERHANDED ON EX SOLID'S PART.
IT'S LOOKING LIKE OUR THIRD PARTY IS THE ONE WHO STOLE THE PAYLOAD.
YES.

.....
However, there's one other thing weighing on my mind.
HE'S GOT AT LEAST ONE OTHER COLLABO-RATOR.
KI-KI-KI! (SCREECH)
WHICH MEANS THERE ARE LIKELY MORE...
AS FOR HIM, YOU'LL GET YOUR HEAVY FIREPOWER, AS PROMISED.
WE'LL FIND A WAY TO DEAL WITH THEM.

USE IT AS YOU SEE FIT.
MUCH APPRECIATED, PROFESSOR.





SIGN: FIRST INVESTIGATIVE SECTION

THE BOMBING, MURDERS, AND SHOOTINGS WERE ALL IN CLOSE PROXIMITY.
HIGH PROBABILITY OF A CONNECTION.
.....
...TWO FIRE-FIGHTS ...
MEANWHILE, THE GUYS WHO BROKE INTO EX SOLID ARE DEAD.
AND WHOEVER DID THEM IS THE SAME GUY WHO RAIDED KAKUHOUKAI.
TWO OTHER VICTIMS INVOLVED IN THAT INCIDENT ARE IN CRITICAL CONDITION... THERE'S SOME SORT OF HIDDEN WAR GOING ON RIGHT UNDER MY NOSE...

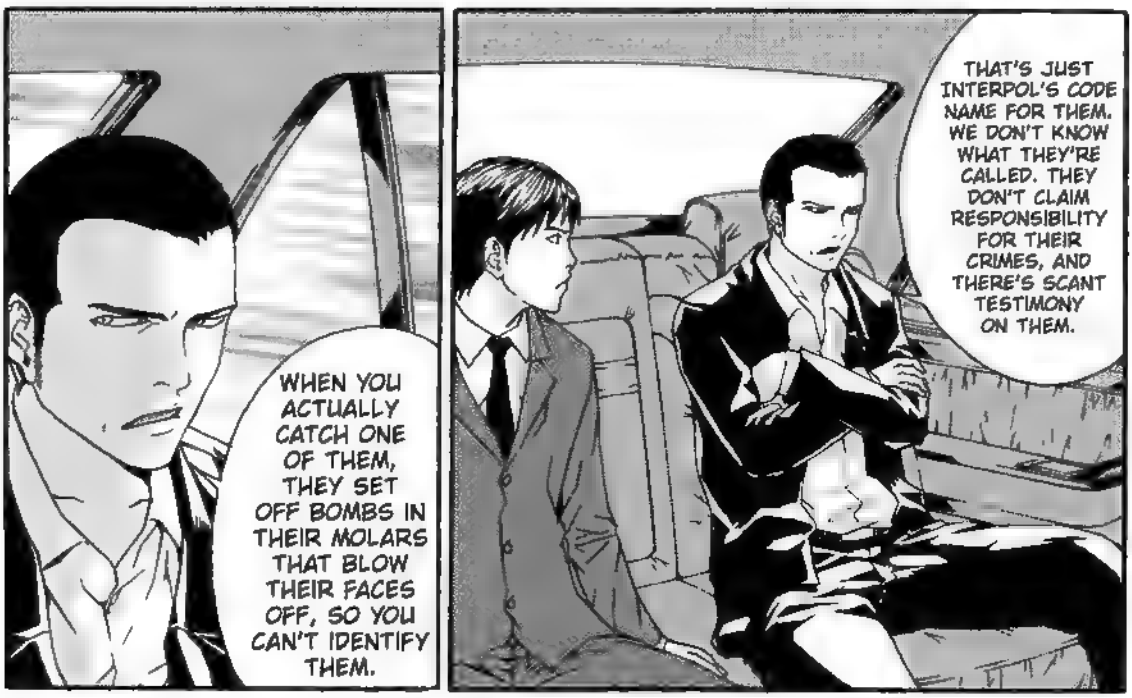
AND IS THERE A THIRD PARTY INVOLVED?
...

...THAT WAS QUICK...
GENDA-SAN!
GOT THE FILES FROM INTERPOL.
YOU CAN PUT IN A REQUEST FOR INFO AT THREE IN THE MORNING...
...AND THAT'S SMACK IN THE MIDDLE OF THEIR BUSINESS HOURS.
GATA (SLAM)
PERA (FLIP)
...

HEY, WHERE ARE YOU GOING!?
BA CRUSH
HUH?
...OH BROTHER...
THE POLICE HOSPITAL.
GOTTA TALK TO THE VICTIMS.

ブオオオ
BUOOO
(VRRM)

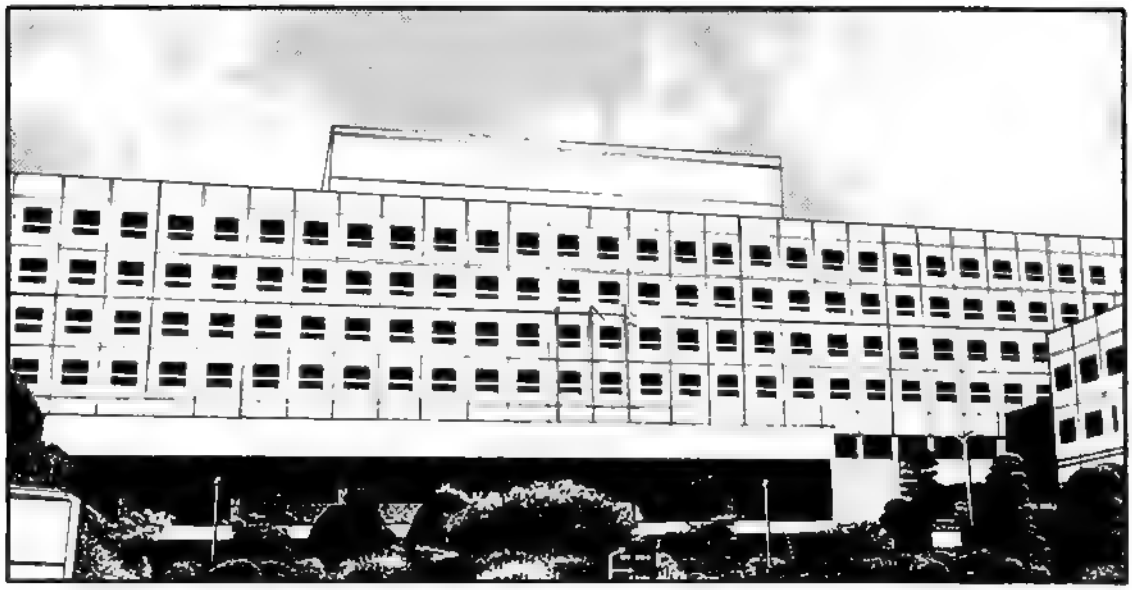
...THE "PLUNDER-ERS"...?
THAT'S WHAT OUR TERRORISTS ARE CALLED?


WHEN YOU ACTUALLY CATCH ONE OF THEM, THEY SET OFF BOMBS IN THEIR MOLARS THAT BLOW THEIR FACES OFF, SO YOU CAN'T IDENTIFY THEM.
THAT'S JUST INTERPOL'S CODE NAME FOR THEM. WE DON'T KNOW WHAT THEY'RE CALLED. THEY DON'T CLAIM RESPONSIBILITY FOR THEIR CRIMES, AND THERE'S SCANT TESTIMONY ON THEM.

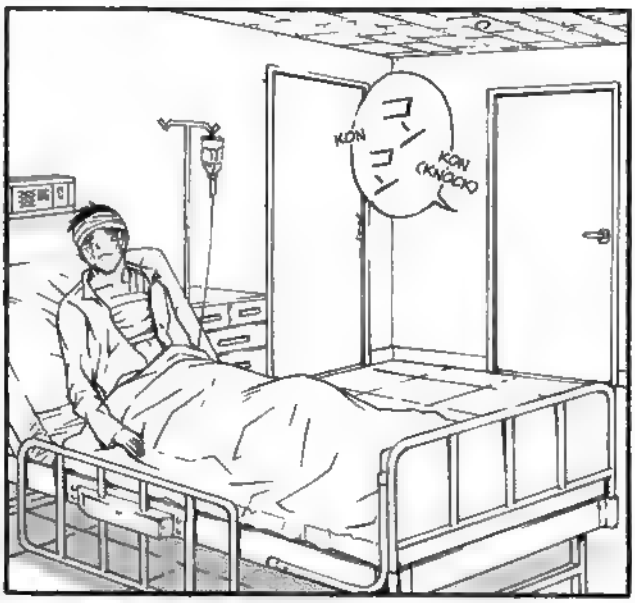
THERE ARE SEVERAL CASES OVERSEAS THAT FOLLOW THE SAME SCRIPT: HAND OVER THE TECH, OR WE BLOW YOU UP.
JUST LIKE THE BODIES WE FOUND AT EX SOLID.
EXACTLY.
WE CAN ONLY IMAGINE HOW MUCH THEY'VE DONE THAT HASN'T COME TO LIGHT.
THE TOTAL ON THE DAMAGES THEY'VE CAUSED IS OVER 1.4 BILLION YEN, AND THAT'S JUST WHAT WE KNOW ABOUT.
AND THIS IS THE SECOND CASE OF THEM COMMITTING SUICIDE BY TOOTH-BOMB...
...WITHOUT ANY TYPE OF LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT INVOLVEMENT.

IT IS.
IT MEANS THE PLUNDERERS HAVE ENEMIES ASIDE FROM THE POLICE.
.....
THAT'S STRANGE...
AND THE ENEMY OF MY ENEMY IS MY FRIEND...
...SO WE SHOULD FIND A WAY TO MAKE USE OF THEM.
...SO...
...YOU THINK THE FOREIGNER WOUNDED IN THE FIREFIGHT MIGHT FIT THE BILL?

...COULD BE. FOR ALL I KNOW, HE COULD BE ONE OF THE TERRORISTS HIMSELF...
KON (THUD)
...HAAH...
KNOW WHAT YOU'RE GETTING INTO HERE. THE DEPARTMENT CAN'T SPARE MEN FOR CRIMES THAT HAVEN'T HAPPENED YET.
WE HAVE TO ASSUME WE'RE FOLLOWING THIS LEAD ON OUR OWN.
HUH!?
I'M NEVER CASHING IN MY VACATION DAYS, AM I...?



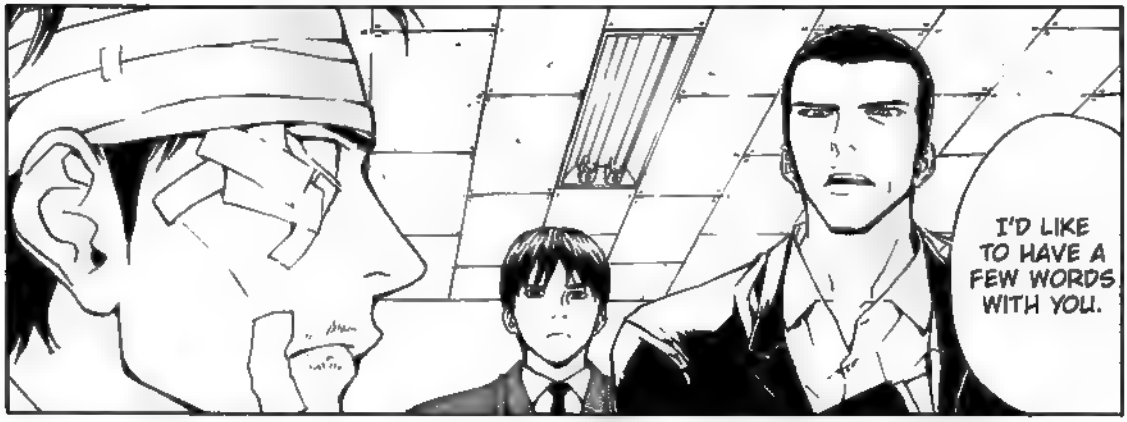
?
RIGHT IN HERE.


KON
KON (KNOCK)

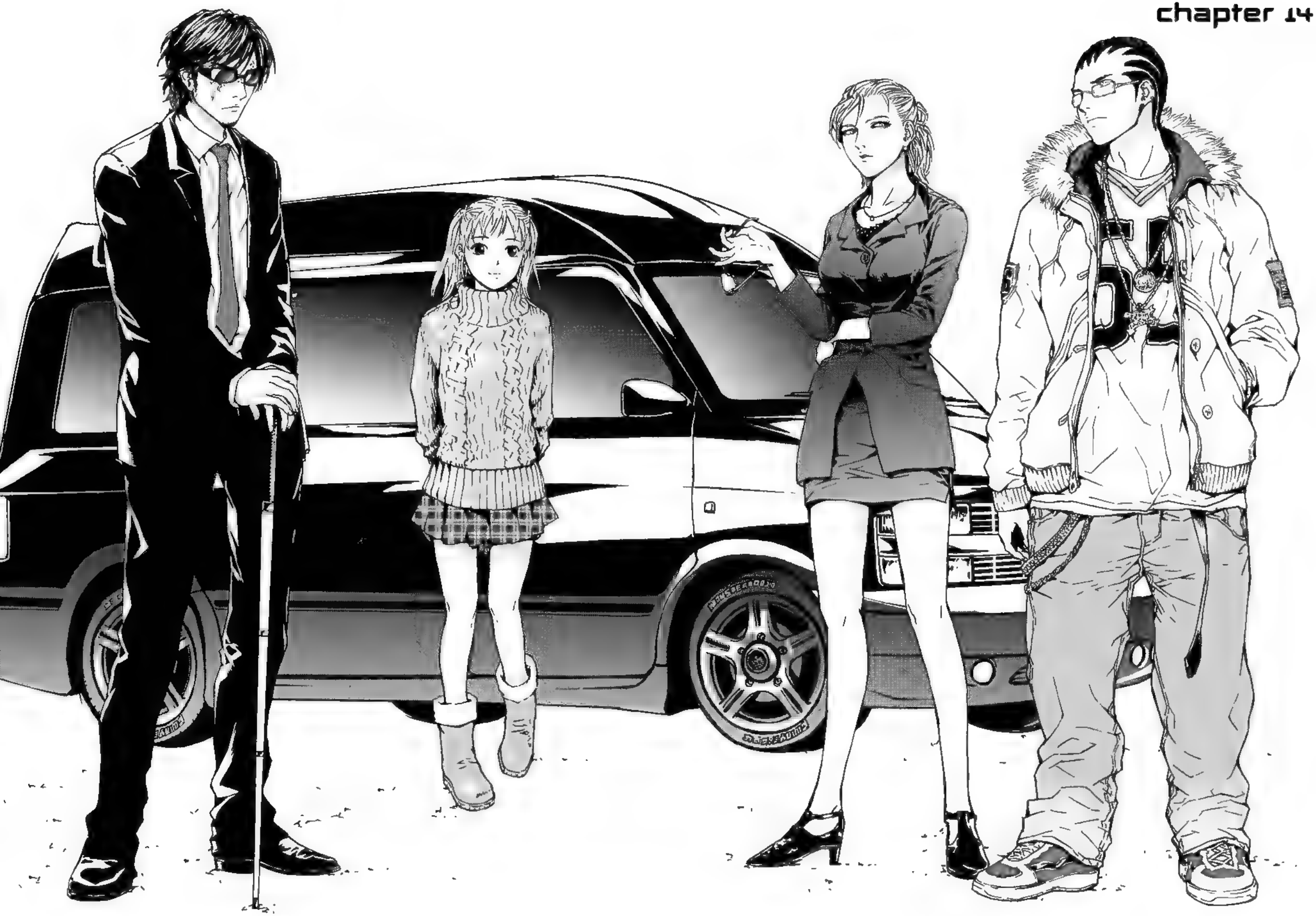
GACHA (CLICK)

PARDON US.
.....

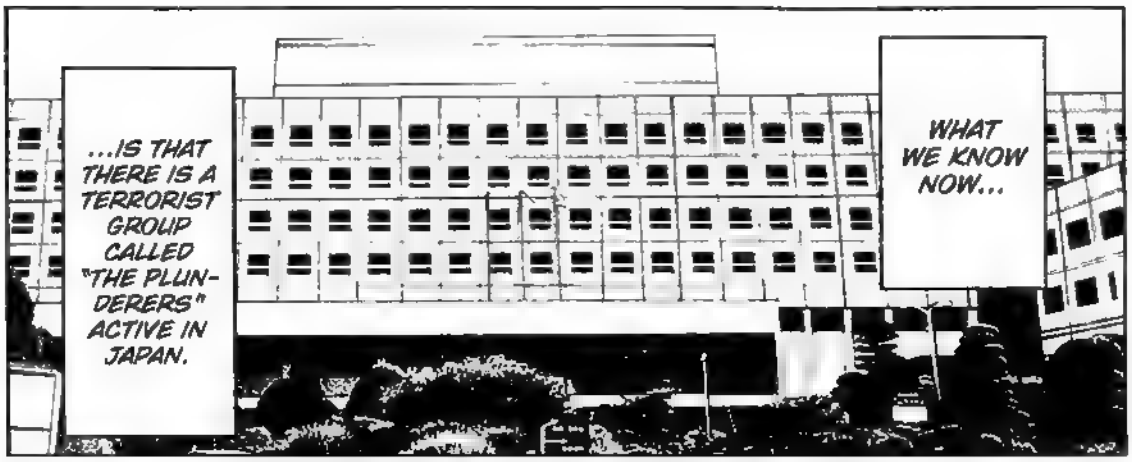
...POLICE...


I'D LIKE TO HAVE A FEW WORDS WITH YOU.

I'VE GOT A BAD FEELING ABOUT THIS GUY...



chapter 14


...IS THAT THERE IS A TERRORIST GROUP CALLED "THE PLUNDERERS" ACTIVE IN JAPAN.
WHAT WE KNOW NOW...

THEIR GOAL IS TO EXTORT THE INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY OF JAPAN'S TECH COMPANIES.

...I HAVE A FEW QUESTIONS FOR YOU.
AND THE PLUNDERERS HAVE AN ENEMY HERE THAT IS NOT LAW ENFORCEMENT.

I DON'T UNDERSTAND JAPANESE SO GOOD ...
WHAT YOU WANT?

<I'M A TOURIST, OF COURSE.>
<I THOUGHT I ALREADY TOLD YOU PEOPLE THAT.>
...
<WE CAN SPEAK IN ENGLISH IF YOU'D LIKE.>
<OKAY ...?
<SO WHY ARE YOU IN JAPAN?>
OF COURSE, THAT DOESN'T PROVE THAT HE'S NOT A TERRORIST.
BASED ON THE HOSPITAL CHART, HE DOESN'T HAVE A BOMB IMPLANTED IN HIM...
WHAT IS GENDA-SAN GOING TO DO?

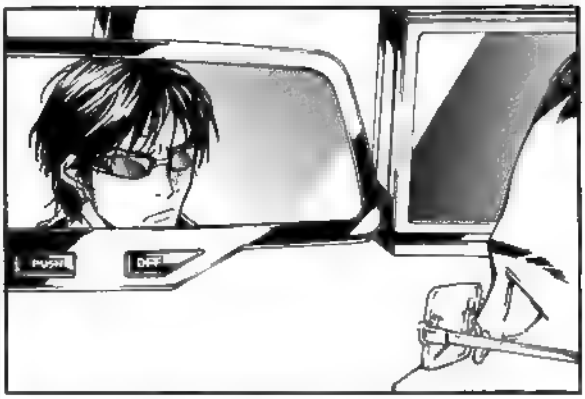
IT'S ALL SET.
HOW ABOUT THE SPARE BLADE?
THIS ONE'S FUEL BATTERIES ARE GOOD TO GO. ALL THAT'S LEFT IS...
...PLENTY OF LOUD-HAILERS AND TRANSMITTERS TOO. EVERY-THING CHECKS OUT.
...WHOA!?

SORRY ABOUT THE WAIT.
?
I TOLD YOU WE WERE TAKING THE INITIATIVE, DIDN'T I?
UH, SO... WHAT'S THE PLAN?

WHAT THE...!?
I'M GOING WITH YOU TODAY.
HMM ...?
...EVEN THOUGH YOU DIDN'T YESTERDAY ...?
IT WAS BETTER FOR ME TO STAY HERE THEN.
DOSA (THUD)
.....

GACHA
(CLICK)
LET'S GET GOING.

BUOOOO
(VRRRM)
.....


PUSH
OFF

BUOOOOO
(VRRRM)

<THE BLAST CARRIED THROUGH THE VENTS OUT TO ALL THE FLOORS OF THE BUILDING.>
<...USED PLASTIC EXPLOSIVES IN THE THIRD-FLOOR BATHROOM VENTS, ACCORDING TO OUR ANALYSIS.>
.....
<SO THESE BOMBERS THAT WE'RE AFTER RIGHT NOW...>
WHY IS HE LAYING ALL OF THIS INFORMATION OUT?
IS HE GOING THROUGH ALL OF THIS TO CHECK MY REACTION BEFORE HE MAKES UP HIS MIND, RATHER THAN GOING BY PROTOCOL?
.....
YOU FIND THESE CLEVER ONES ANY-WHERE...

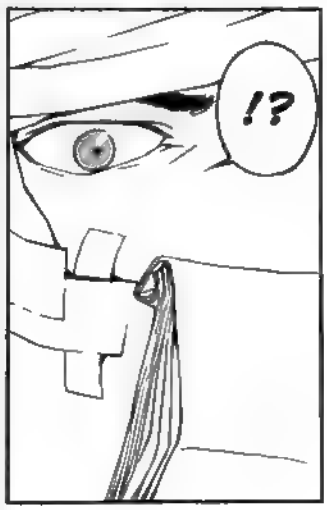
<I'VE GOT A LIST OF SUSPECTS WHO ARE LIKELY TO HAVE BEEN INVOLVED IN THESE INTERNATIONAL INCIDENTS.>

.....

<DO YOU SEE THE MAN WHO ATTACKED YOU?>

I SEE... SO WE'RE GOING TO PLAY GIVE-AND-TAKE, HUH?

Australian Government
Department of Immigrati
Multicultural and Indigen
EDGE TURUS
DESCRIPTION
Dates of Birth Used:
April 9 1969 Hair
Place of Birth
Height 5 8' to
Weight 175
Build
Scars and
Remarks
CAUTION


!?

<IT WAS DARK, BUT I RECOGNIZE THIS MAN. THIS IS THE GUY...>
<.....>
<EDGE TURUS, REPUBLIC OF GALBOA.>
?
TCH...
GATA (THUMP)
<I'LL BE BACK.>
<THANK YOU.>

...AND I THOUGHT I'D BE SAFE HERE WITH THE POLICE...
TA (TAP)
I GUESS THIS ISN'T GOING TO BE THAT SIMPLE...
YOU CAN'T DO THIS!
IF YOU DON'T HAVE AN APPOINTMENT, YOU'RE NOT ALLOWED—
BATAN (SLAM)
AAAH!

WHAT THE HELL IS THIS!?

I WANT TO TALK TO YOU ABOUT YOUR BIO-CHIP.

GIKU (TWITCH)
……!?

SO... WHO ARE YOU!?

UH ...

GACHA (CLICK)

DON'T TRY TO CHANGE THE SUBJECT.
THAT'S QUITE A SPECTACULAR PIECE OF HARDWARE. AND THE MAJORITY OF IT USES EX SOLID'S INTEGRATED CIRCUITS.
PEOPLE IN POSSESSION OF ONE OF YOUR BIO-CHIPS, THAT'S WHO.
AND YOU'RE THE ONES WHO HAVE HARUKA TOOYAMA, RIGHT!?
...
I SEE... MEANING THAT ALL OF THIS WAS AN INDEPENDENT DECISION BY THE JAPANESE BRANCH.
SUTA スタ
SUTA (STRIDE) スタ
IT'LL BE PRETTY EASY FOR ANYONE TO TRACK DOWN WHERE IT CAME FROM.
NO WONDER YOU WERE SO QUICK TO WILT UNDER PRESSURE AND HAND IT OVER TO TERROR-ISTS.
DOES CORPORATE KNOW ABOUT YOUR LITTLE FIASCO?

CLEAR YOUR CALENDAR FOR THE REST OF THE DAY.
I THINK YOU NEED TO BE TAUGHT A LITTLE LESSON, FOR YOUR OWN SAKE.
GUI (YANK)

...WH-WHAT ARE YOU AFTER...?
MONEY? THE TECH?

IT'S ALREADY TOO LATE FOR YOU TO DO ANYTHING ABOUT IT.
YOU DON'T HAVE A CHOICE IN THE MATTER, OF COURSE.

BATA (KICK)
BATA

OR...
GUGU (LIFT)
URGH... AH...

...WOULD YOU RATHER SEE THE CORPSES OF YOUR FAMILY?

...THIS MAN...

DOSA (THWUD)

...

SO, WHAT'S UP?
...THESE FILES...
TSUKA (TOK)
TSUKA
TSUKA
BUT IF WE FIND OUT WHO THE ATTACKER IS HERE...
...THEN WE CAN ARREST HIM, AND THE WHOLE HOUSE OF CARDS MIGHT...
...WERE COMPILED BY INTERPOL BASED ON PEOPLE WHO WERE KNOWN TO BE IN THE COUNTRIES WHERE THE TERRORIST ATTACKS OCCURRED, BEFORE AND AFTER.
AS EVIDENCE GOES, IT'S PRETTY WEAK.

WHAT!? YOU'RE JOKING!
WE CAN'T!
EDGE TURUS IS A GALBOAN AMBASSADOR! HE HAS DIPLOMATIC IMMUNITY!!

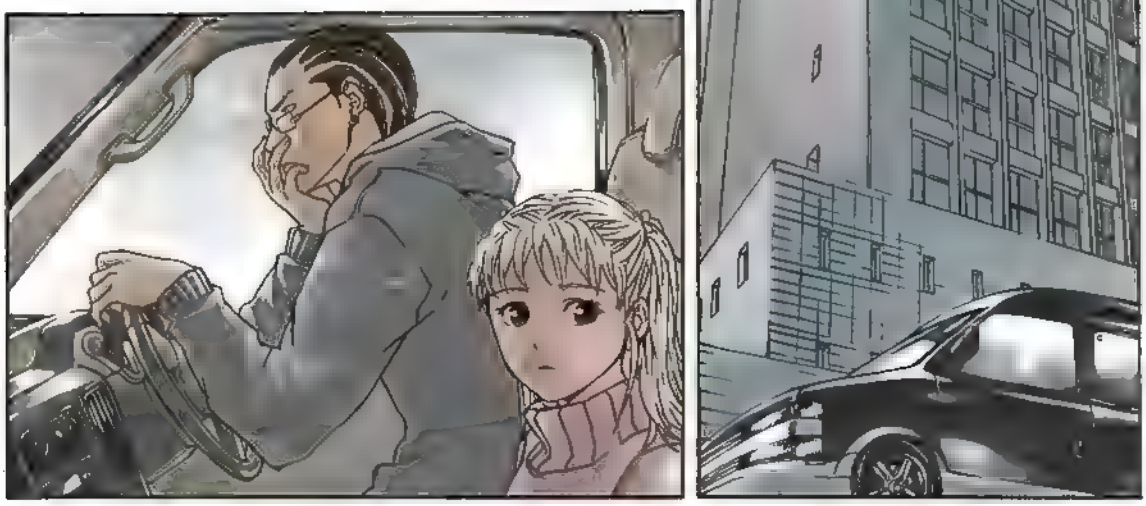
GIRI (GRIT)
THE PROBLEM IS THAT KNOWING WHAT'S GOING ON DOESN'T MEAN WE CAN ACTUALLY DO ANYTHING ABOUT IT...

THE ONE WITH ALL THE NASTY RUMORS ABOUT MERCENARIES, WEAPONS SMUGGLING, AND SO ON...
GALBOA'S THAT EMERGING NATION IN AFRICA, RIGHT?

I'M GETTING A GRASP ON WHAT WE'RE DEALING WITH HERE...
THEIR GOVERNMENT IS GROOMING A MAJOR TERRORIST, IT JUST HASN'T BEEN EXPOSED YET.

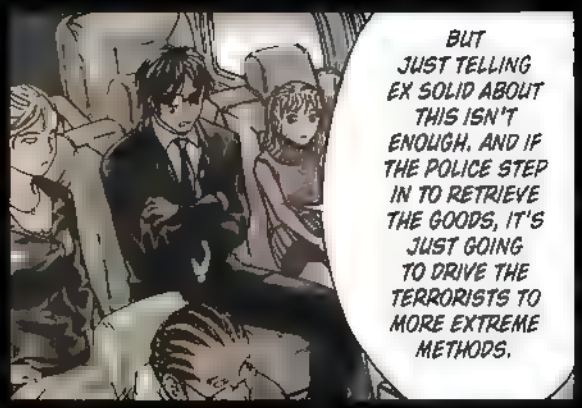
ペラ
PERA
(FLIP)
...

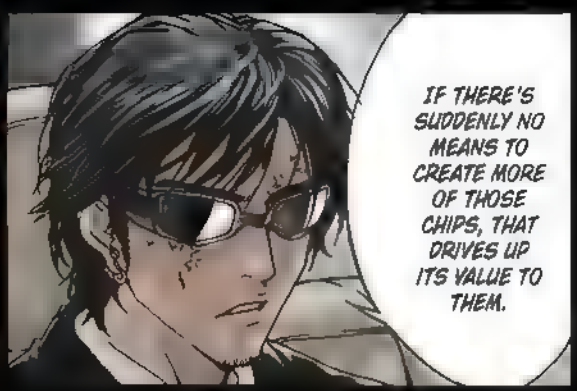
Until
Death
do us
Part



I CAN'T IMAGINE THESE TERRORISTS ARE JUST GONNA GIVE UP ON THE BIOCHIP.

MEANING THE BAIT WE'RE HANGING OVER THEIR HEADS BECOMES EVEN MORE TANTALIZING.


BUT JUST TELLING EX SOLID ABOUT THIS ISN'T ENOUGH. AND IF THE POLICE STEP IN TO RETRIEVE THE GOODS, IT'S JUST GOING TO DRIVE THE TERRORISTS TO MORE EXTREME METHODS.


IF THERE'S SUDDENLY NO MEANS TO CREATE MORE OF THOSE CHIPS, THAT DRIVES UP ITS VALUE TO THEM.

chapter 15

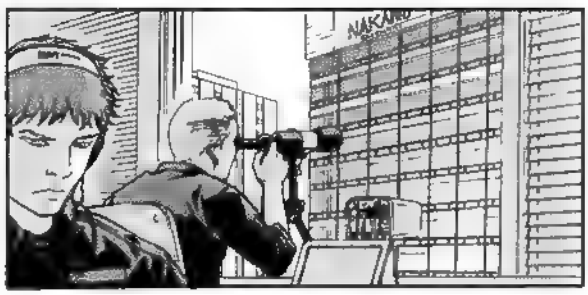
chapter 15

Until
Death
do us
Part

JUST TO MAKE SURE THE DAMAGE DOESN'T SPREAD WHILE WE'RE HARD AT WORK.
YEAH.
THE WALL IS CURRENTLY STAKING OUT NAKANO ELECTRONICS.
THEY COULD BE DISMANTLING BOMBS EVEN AS WE SPEAK, RIGHT?
.....

KON (KNOCK)
KON

NAKANO
Electronics

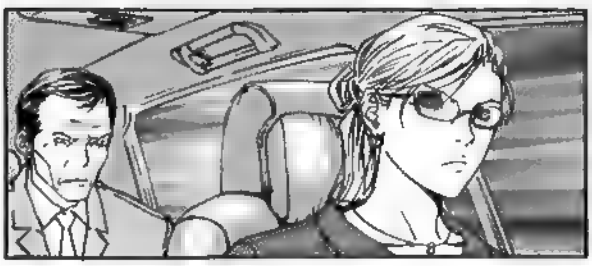

NAKANO

I TOLD YOU TO GET SOME REST.
...YOU GOTTA BE KIDDING ME...
YOU THINK I CAN'T TAKE ON SOME FILTHY TERRORISTS ONE-HANDED?
FOX?
YOU'RE INCORRIGIBLE.
MEET UP WITH THE REST OF THE DETACHMENT. YOU MIGHT GET TO SHOOT A FEW BAD GUYS.
THANK YOU, SIR.

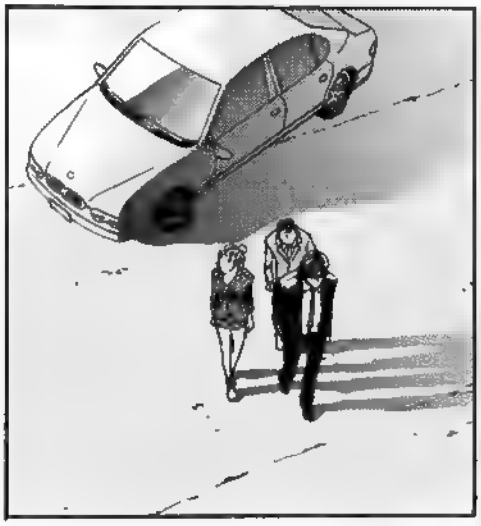
Ex
Solid
I KNOW WE'RE TRYING NOT TO STAND OUT...
...BUT HOW CAN THEY GO IN PACKING ONLY SIERRA'S HANDGUN AND A KNIFE?
IS THAT REALLY SAFE?
BUOOO (VRRMM)
BUROORO (VRMM)

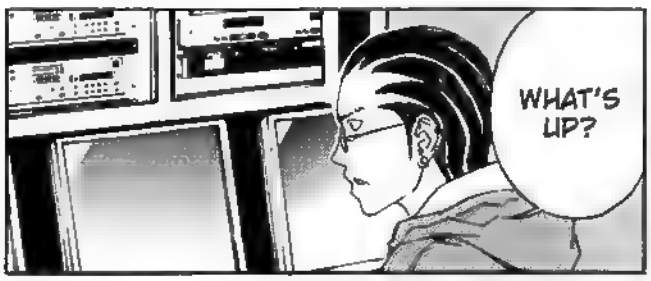
...
...IS SOMETHING GOING TO HAPPEN ...?
...I'M... SURE IT IS...
...BUT STILL...
MAKE SURE YOU LOCK THE DOORS...
?
...AND TAKE THE CAR AROUND THE REAR.

...IS THAT IT...?

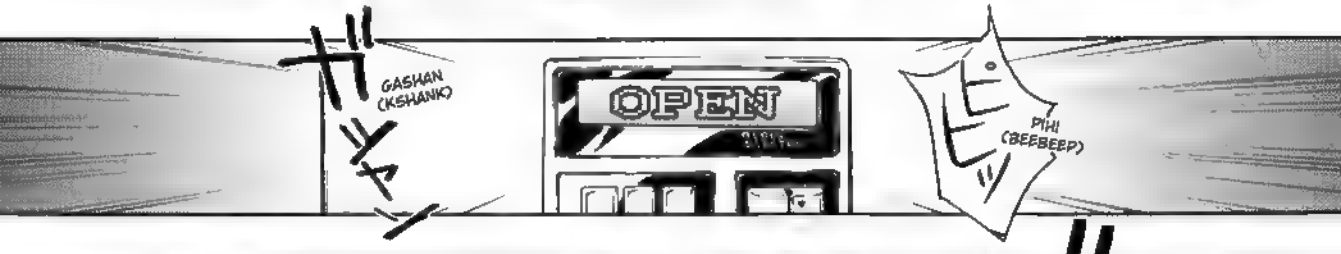


SIGN: EX SOLID CENTRAL RESEARCH



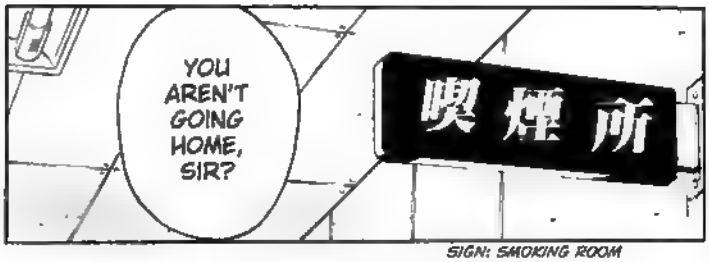

WHAT'S UP?

DUNNO.
ASK HARUKA.

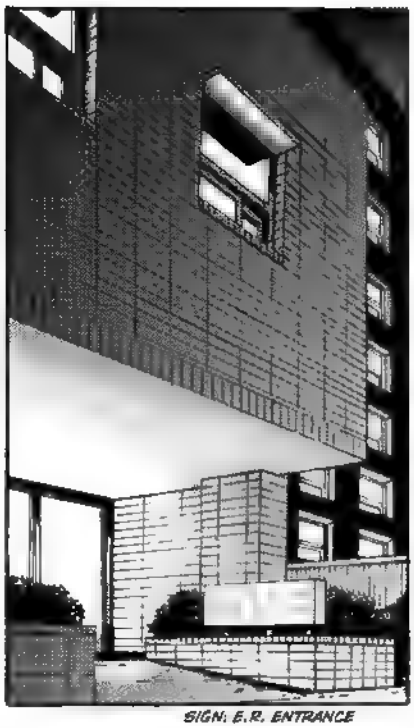

GASHAN (KSHANK)
OPEN
PIHI (BEEBEEP)

...

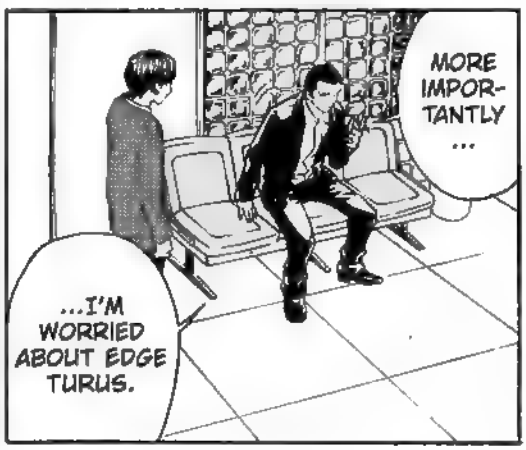
GACHA (CLICK)



SIGN: SMOKING ROOM



SIGN: E.R. ENTRANCE



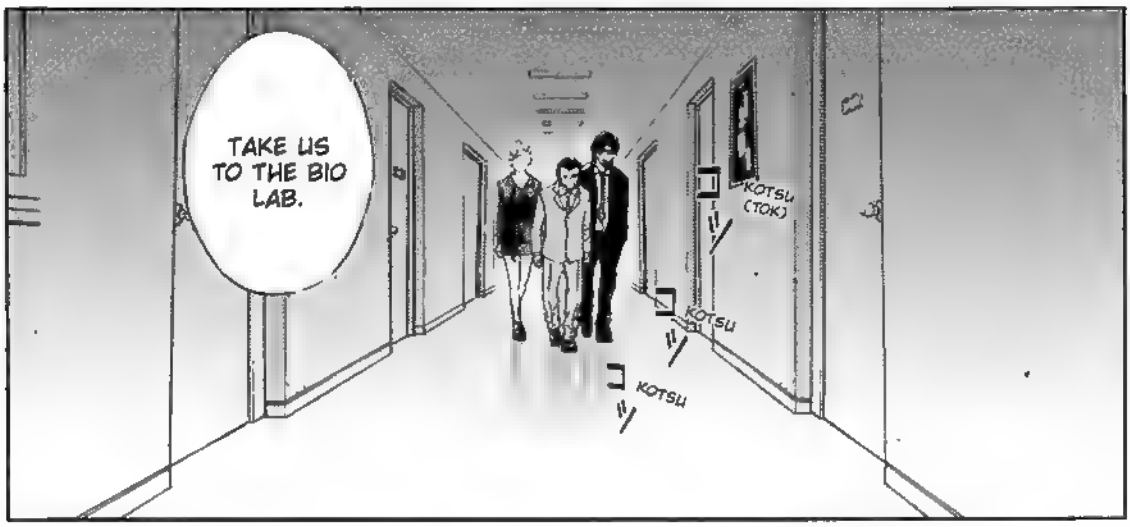
WHAT'S THE DAMN PLAN?
.....
WHAT DO WE DO NOW? THEY'RE TOTALLY BEYOND OUR REACH.

HUNH?
...I'VE GOT A BAD FEELING ABOUT THIS...

NO WAY!
ON WHAT BASIS!?

JUST TELL THEM IT'S A MESSAGE FROM GENDA.
I'M STAYING HERE.
I SAID NO WAY!

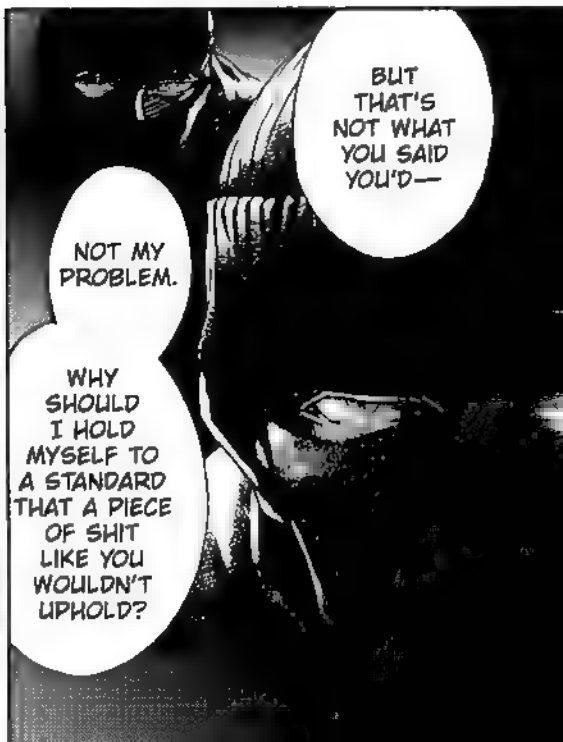
MASUDA, CAN YOU GO BACK TO THE OFFICE AND PUT THE RIOT UNIT ON STANDBY?


TAKE US TO THE BIO LAB.
KOTSU (TOK)
KOTSU
KOTSU

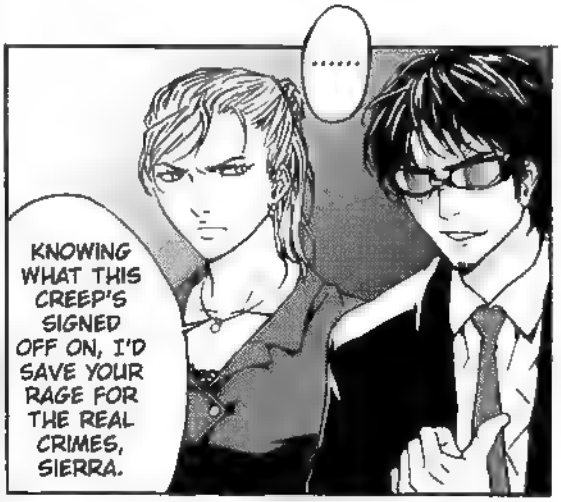
...DEPENDS.

AND...
...AND YOU SWEAR YOU WON'T LET WORD OF THIS GET OUT...?

OF COURSE I WAS.
SO YOU WERE PLANNING ON USING ME FROM THE VERY START!


BUT THAT'S NOT WHAT YOU SAID YOU'D—
NOT MY PROBLEM.
WHY SHOULD I HOLD MYSELF TO A STANDARD THAT A PIECE OF SHIT LIKE YOU WOULDN'T UPHOLD?

...BIGGER TO DEAL WITH!
DOGA (SLAM)
WHA—!?

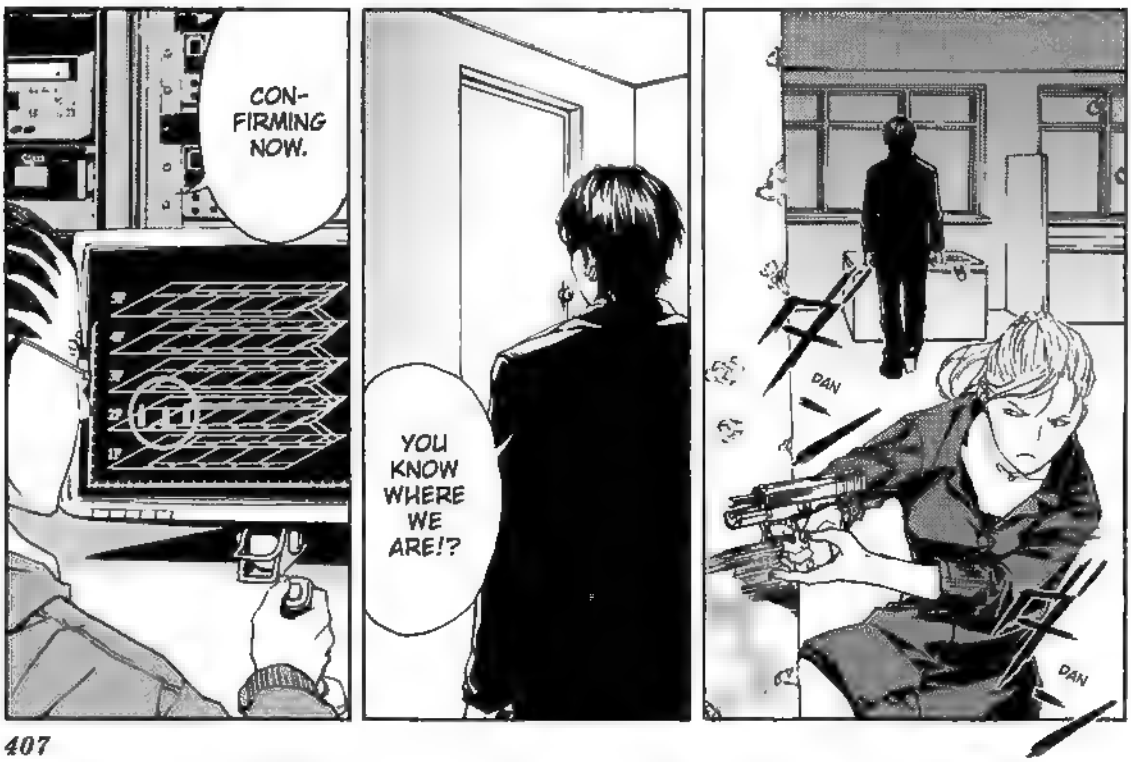

.....
KNOWING WHAT THIS CREEP'S SIGNED OFF ON, I'D SAVE YOUR RAGE FOR THE REAL CRIMES, SIERRA.

BESIDES, I THINK WE'VE GOT SOME-THING...

DA (TAT)
DA
DA
DA
GA
GA
GA
CHUN
CHUN (PIOOO)
GAGA (GAGAKK)

GAH!
AAAAH!

DAN
DAN
DAN
NOT AGAIN...THESE TERRORISTS GUYS ALWAYS SEEM TO HAVE THE SAME IDEA AS US...
DAN (BLAM)
DAN
ISN'T THERE ANY-THING BETTER YOU COULD BE DOING!?


CON-FIRMING NOW.
YOU KNOW WHERE WE ARE!?
DAN
DAN

.....
TARGET IS FIVE METERS AHEAD.
I'm on it.
DA- (DASH)
NOW !!

AAGH!
DOGA (SLAMM)
PARA (SPRINKLE)
BA (DUCK)
PARA
PARA
GASHAAN (CRASH)
!?

GYU (SQUEEZE)
GYU SWOOSH

SA (SHHP)
GACHA (CLICK)
PUSHUUU (PSHHT)
SUPA (SLASH)

CHAKI (CHAKK)
ZAN (SLICE)

DOGA (KAPOW)
!?
DOO (WHOOSH)
DOSA (THUD)
RRGH.
JIRI (STEP)
NNGH ...!
JIRI
DOSU (SHINK)

KIN
(KTING)
ВИБНИЦИ
(BLSHT)
GHRKK!

BYU (SWISH)
ビュッ
UWAAH!
YOU'RE NOT TAKIN' THE EASY WAY OUT.
RAAAAAAA

PUSHUUU (PSHHT)
NEXT IS... SIERRA... HERE WE GO.
UIIIIII (WHEEE)
GACHA (CLICK)
UIIIII
BOFU (BMMF)
ZUSHAAA (SLIDE)
KASHAN (CRASH)
AAAH!

KACHA
BE A LITTLE GENTLER NEXT TIME!
POCHI (POP)
KACHA (CLICK)
GASHA (CHAK)
CHU (CHK)
WELL, AT LEAST IT MADE IT IN ONE PIECE.
PASHUSHUSHU (PSHPSHT)

SIGN E R ENTRANCE
GACHA (CLICK)
.....

Until
Death
do us
Part

DA (DAT)
DA
DA
DA
DA
Ex Solid
中央研究所
SIGN: EX SOLID CENTRAL RESEARCH
BAK. (CRAKK)
GA (GSH)
GA
GA
GA
DA (LEAP)

DODA (THWAK)
ZUGA (KRAK)
...WASTED A LOTTA TIME HERE...
DOSU (THUD)
BUSHU (BSHT)
AAAAGH!

chapter 16

...WH-WHY IS THIS HAPPENING ...?
KA (TOK).
OUR INTERFERENCE SEEMS TO HAVE LIT A FIRE UNDER THE ENEMY'S ASS.
KA
IF THE TRUTH ABOUT THIS SHOULD GET OUT, POLICE INVOLVEMENT WILL BE UNAVOID-ABLE.
IF THAT HAPPENS, IT'LL BE EVEN HARDER FOR THEM TO GET THEIR HANDS ON THE PAY-LOAD.
DON (KICK)
AAH!
...
THEY REALLY, REALLY WANT THIS BIOCHIP OF YOURS.

LOOKS LIKE THE BUILDING'S CLEAN.
BASED ON HOW EASY IT WAS TO BREAK THEM...
...I'M GUESSING THEY DIDN'T EXPECT TO RUN ACROSS US.
BUT THEY STILL FOUGHT BACK RATHER THAN RETREAT, WHICH MEANS THEY HADN'T FULFILLED THEIR REASON FOR BEING HERE.
GACHA (CLICK)
ガチャ
WE'RE LUCKY.
Up front, Igawa-san!
!?

!
SHIT!!
BA
(LEAP)
GYAGYAGYA
(SCREEE)
GAGHA
(CHUNK)
km 123
APPLY BRAKE TO S

DA
DA
DA
DA (DAT)
DO
DO
DO
DO (BRATTA)
DO
DO
DO
DO
BUDDO (TRRUMM)
DA
DA
DA
DA
DA
DA
DA
DO
DO
DO
DO
KIN
KIN
KIN
KIN
KIN (CLINK)

OUT-SIDE!
DA (DASH)
TATATAN
TATATAN (TAT)
SU (SWISH)
!?
?

...
LET'S GET OUR PART OVER WITH, SO WE DON'T WASTE TIME.
IGAWA WILL KNOW WHAT TO DO.
WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
AAAH!
GYU (SQUEEZE)

.....
WELL, I'M GOING TO HELP THEM.
BTA (TMP) TA
I WANT TO KNOW WHO THESE PEOPLE ARE.
SASASA (SWISH)

THEY MIGHT RESIST, BUT THEY CAN'T GO ANYWHERE. TAKE THEM IN ALIVE.
HERE'S ONE LAST TIP BEFORE YOU GO.
FINISH OFF THE OTHER PATIENTS TOO, TO SHOW THEM WE'RE SERIOUS.
AND WHEN THEY SEE THE SEA OF BLOOD, THEY'LL KNOW HOW FOOLISH THEY WERE TO OPPOSE US.

...DID SOMETHING CHANGE OUT THERE...?
THEY'RE COMING AFTER ME...

IF WE DON'T GET THAT BACKUP SOON, THIS'LL BE THE LAST NIGHT I EVER SEE.
ONLY FIVE BULLETS...
<OFFICER ...?
<GOOD EVENING. WHERE YOU OFF TO?>

SO HE SENT THE YOUNGER AGENT AWAY FROM THE SCENE...
<WHERE'S YOUR PARTNER??
<BACK TO THE OFFICE, RUNNING AN ERRAND.>
SUCH A SHAME TO WASTE A GOOD COP LIKE HIM...
<JUST GETTING SOME NIGHT AIR.>
<WHY DON'T I ACCOMPANY YOU??
<HUH??

...
<BUT...>
ギュ
GYU (GRAB)
DOESN'T WANT TO BRING INNOCENT VICTIMS INTO THIS...
<DON'T BE SHY.>
TATATATAN (TATTATTAT)

TATATATAN
KKKK (SCREEE)
DO (DMM)
STAY RIGHT THERE!
RRGH!
KIN (CLANK)
KIN
PASHU (PSSH)
SHU (PSH)
SHU
SHU

DADA (DATTA)
DADA
DASHUSHU (PSH PSH)
GA
GA (GSH)
GACHA (CLICK)
YES.
ARE YOU ALL RIGHT, HARUKA!?
BAN (SLAM)
.....
MIGHT'VE DENTED UP THE EXTERIOR A BIT, BUT THAT'S MADE OF A SHAPE-MEMORY ALLOY THAT'LL POP IT BACK INTO PLACE IN AN HOUR.
WE'RE FINE. THE VAN'S GOT SOME SERIOUS ARMOR. THEY WOULDN'T HAVE PUNCHED A HOLE IN THIS THING.

YES!
MAKE IT SO HE CAN'T HEAR US.
CAN YOU KILL THE COMM, IGAWA?
AND THE GLASS IS SOLID—
HUH? WITH MAMORU!?
HARUKA, I WANT YOU TO LISTEN TO WHAT I'M GOING TO SAY VERY CARE-FULLY.
PACHIN (POP)
...
ONCE WE LEAVE THIS PLACE, YOU NEED TO STAY AWAY FROM MAMORU.

I HATE TO HAVE TO SAY IT, BUT...
...BASED ON HIS DEMEANOR AND ACTIONS, HE STRIKES ME AS NO DIFFERENT FROM THE CRIMINALS WE TAKE DOWN.

...WH-WHOA, WHAT'S THIS ALL OF A SUDDEN...?

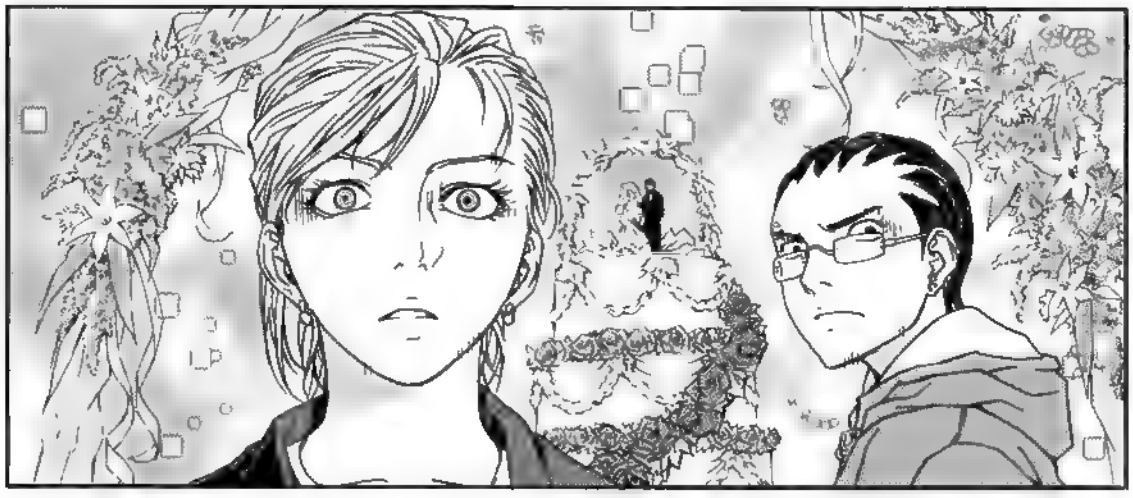
.....
(GLARE)

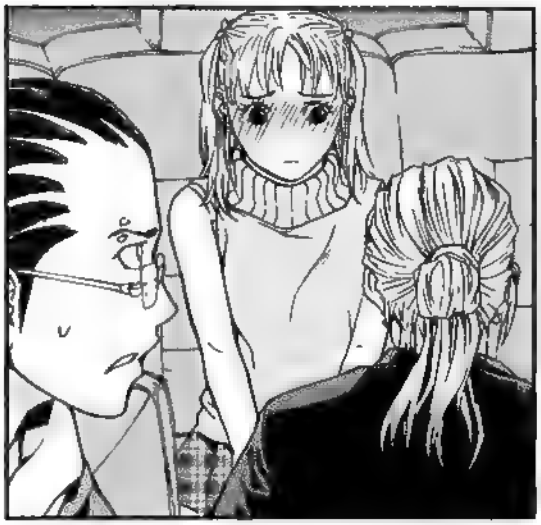
IT CAN'T BE GOOD FOR YOU TO BE AROUND HIM.

...
WHAT DO YOU SAY?
WILL YOU LIVE WITH ME INSTEAD?

...IF YOU QUIT NOW...
I KNOW HOW TO TAKE CARE OF YOU.
IT COULD BE JUST THE OPPORTUNITY I NEED TO LEAVE THIS LINE OF WORK...
WAIT, HOLD ON...
.....
I DON'T KNOW WHAT SORT OF RELATION-SHIP YOU SEE YOURSELF HAVING WITH HIM...
...BUT IT'S DANGEROUS FOR YOU TO BE TOGETHER.
...UMM ...!
WELL...
...YOU'LL REGRET IT.
!?
I'LL BE FINE. YOU SHOULDN'T QUIT YOUR JOB BECAUSE OF ME...

...HE'S MY... FUTURE..... HUSBAND .....!





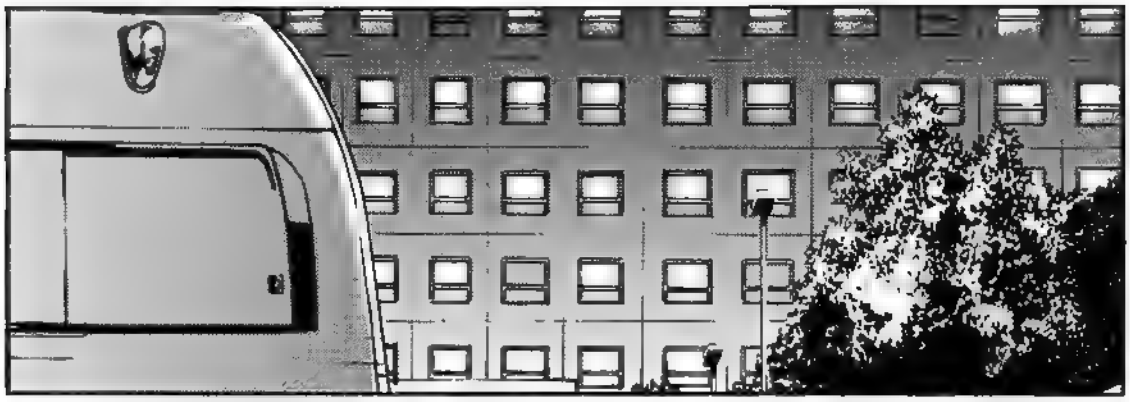
WHU-HAAAAT ...!?
H—
HUH?

...OH...SO THAT'S WHY SHE SAID...
..."UNTIL DEATH DO US PART."

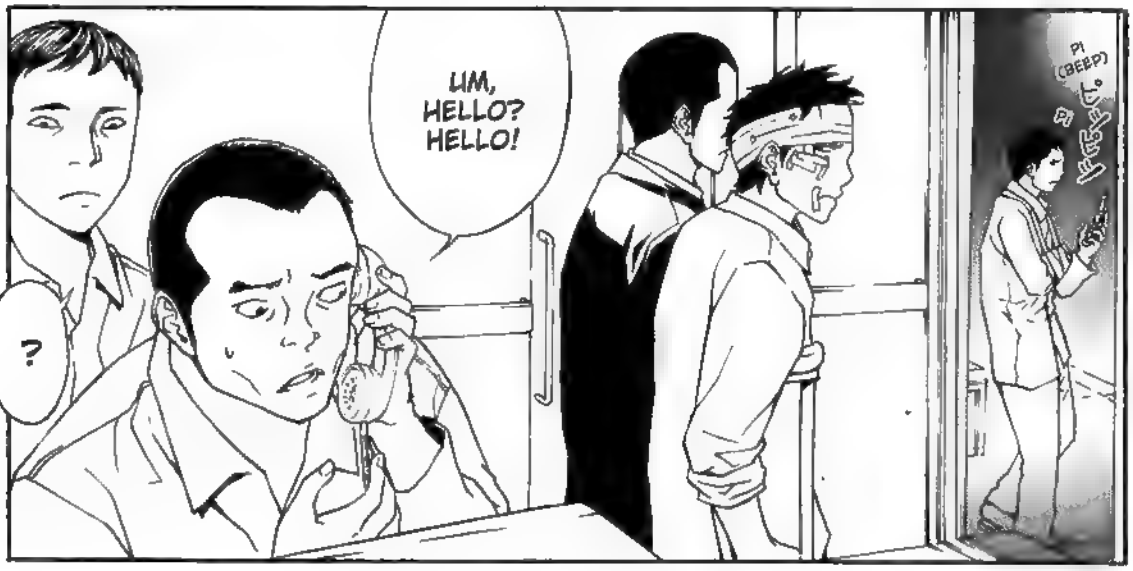
...I DON'T KNOW ABOUT THAT...I DON'T EVEN KNOW IF I LIKE HIM OR NOT.
I BARELY KNOW WHAT KIND OF PERSON MAMORU-SAN IS...
S-SO YOU ACTUALLY INTEND TO MARRY HIM!?
H-HUH? OH...
...YES... OF COURSE YOU DON'T...
...TELL HIM...!? WHAT THE HELL WOULD I EVEN SAY...!?
DON'T TELL MAMORU ABOUT THIS.
KI (GLARE)

SHE KNEW ONE OF THOSE FAINT FUTURE POSSIBILITIES HELD SUCH A PROFOUNDLY DEEP CONNEC-TION BETWEEN THEM...
...
...WHY DID I NEVER NOTICE ...?

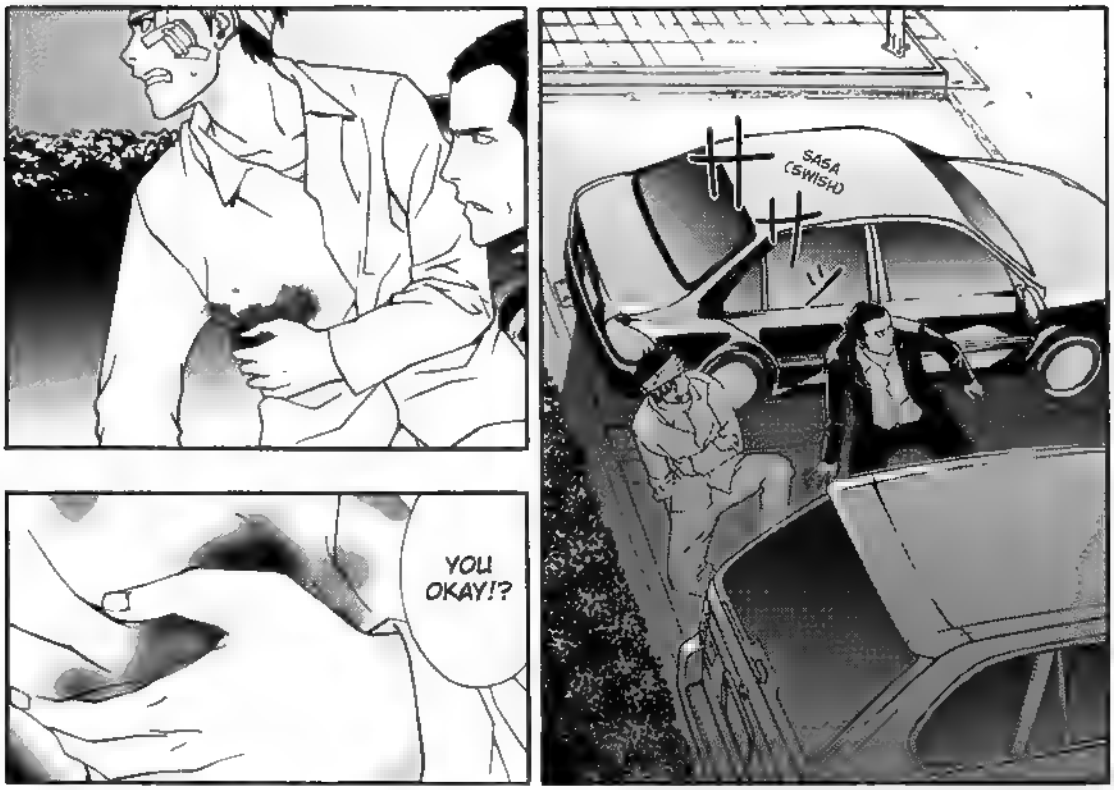
...WHICH IS WHY SHE CHOSE TO ASK MAMORU HIJIKATA FOR HELP IN THE FIRST PLACE!



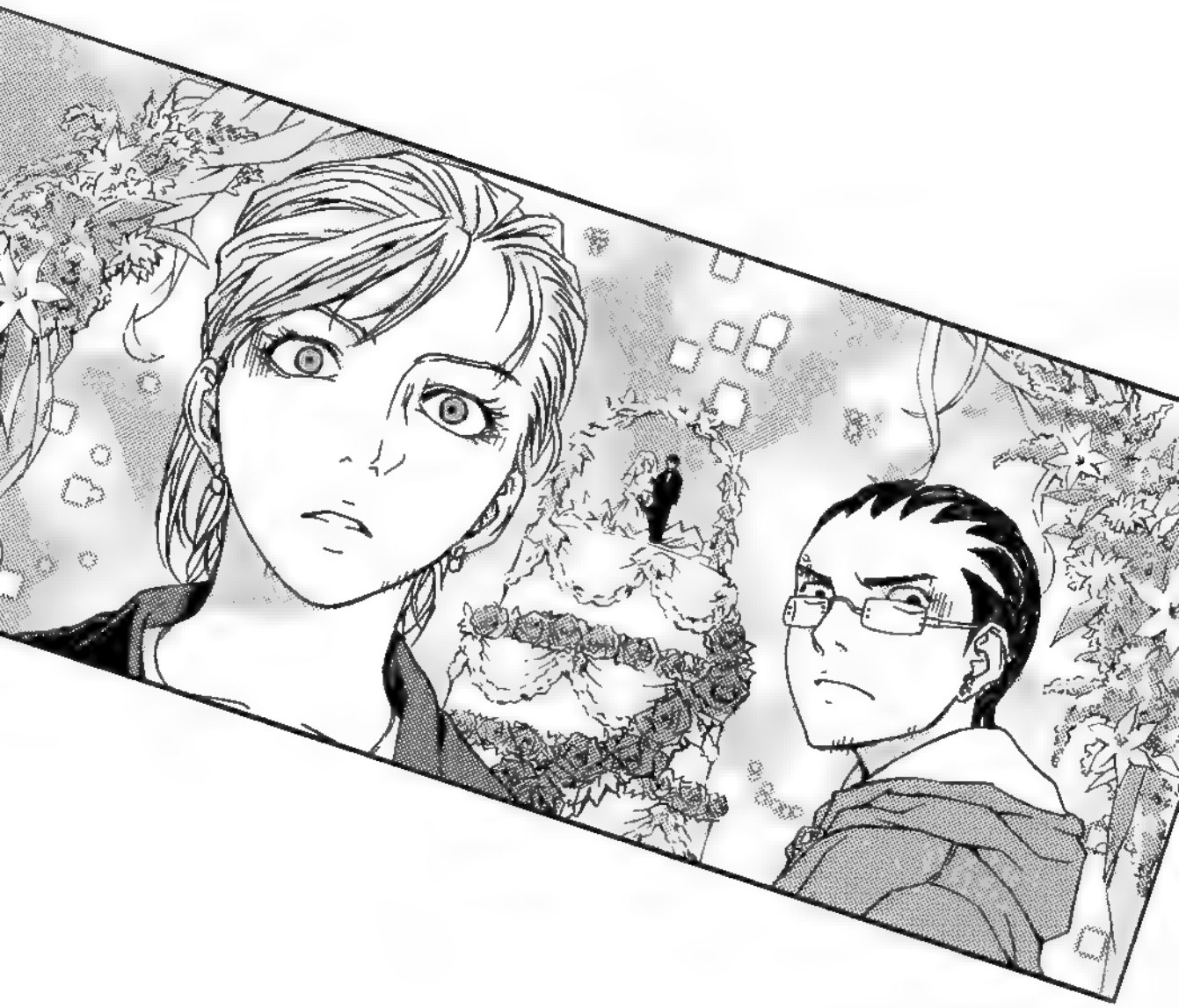
HELLO?
HUH?


UM, HELLO? HELLO!
?
PI (BEEP)

WHAT'S GOING ON?
!!?
.....
DA (DASH)
DA
THIS WAY!



until death do us part ❶ - end

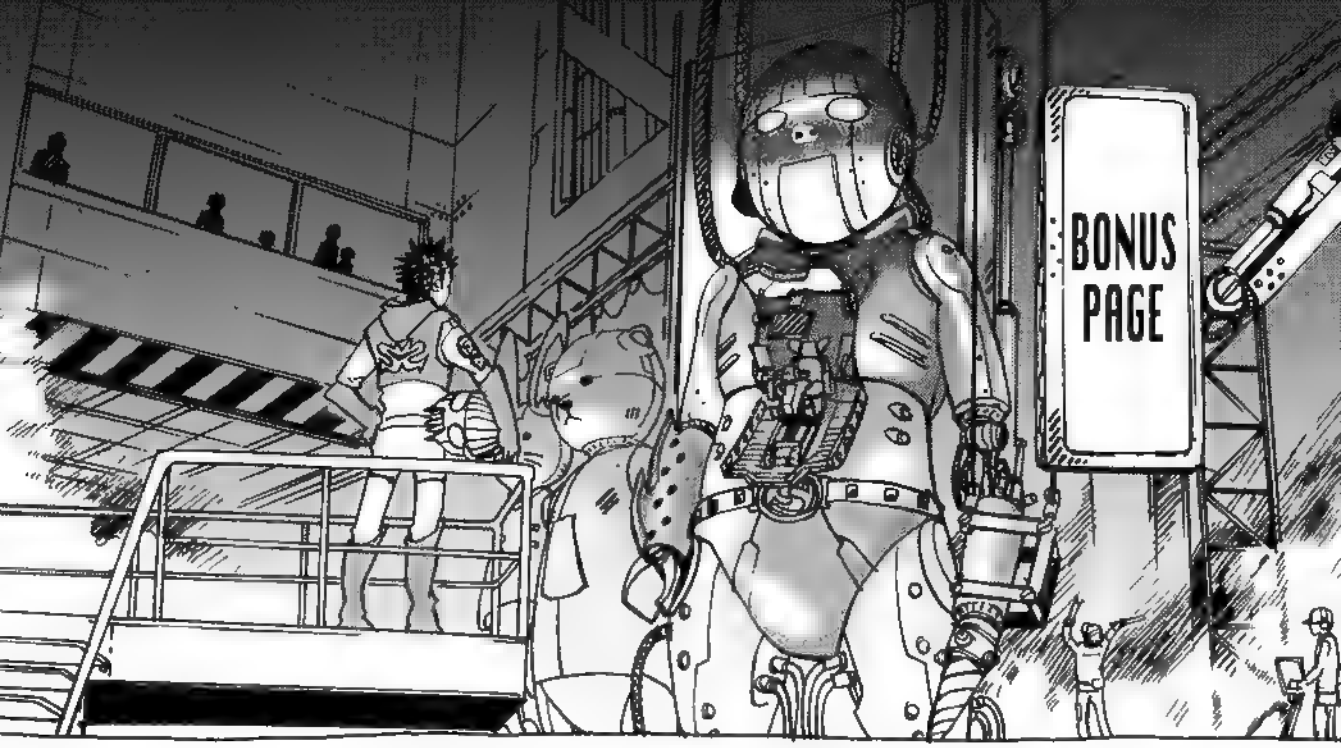


THE WALL 表音コード表

A	アルファ	ALFA
B	ブラボー	BRAVO
C	チャーリー	CHARLIE
D	デルタ	DELTA
E	エコー	ECHO
F	フォックストロット	FOXTROT
G	ゴルフ	GOLF
H	ホテル	HOTEL
I	インディア	INDIA
J	ジュリエット	JULIETT
K	キロ	KILO
L	リマ	LIMA
M	マイク	MIKE
N	ノベンバー	NOVEMBER
O	オスカー	OSCAR
P	パパ	PAPA
Q	ケベック	QUEBEC
R	ロメオ	ROMEO
S	シエラ	SIERRA
T	タンゴ	TANGO
U	ユニフォーム	UNIFORM
V	ヴィクター	VICTOR
W	ウィスキー	WHISKEY
X	エックス・レイ	X-RAY
Y	ヤンキー	YANKEE
Z	ズール	ZULU

-phonetic code-

A system for accurately communicating letters of the alphabet over the radio or telephone, where poor sound quality may impede the ability of the listener to tell apart certain consonants or vowels.

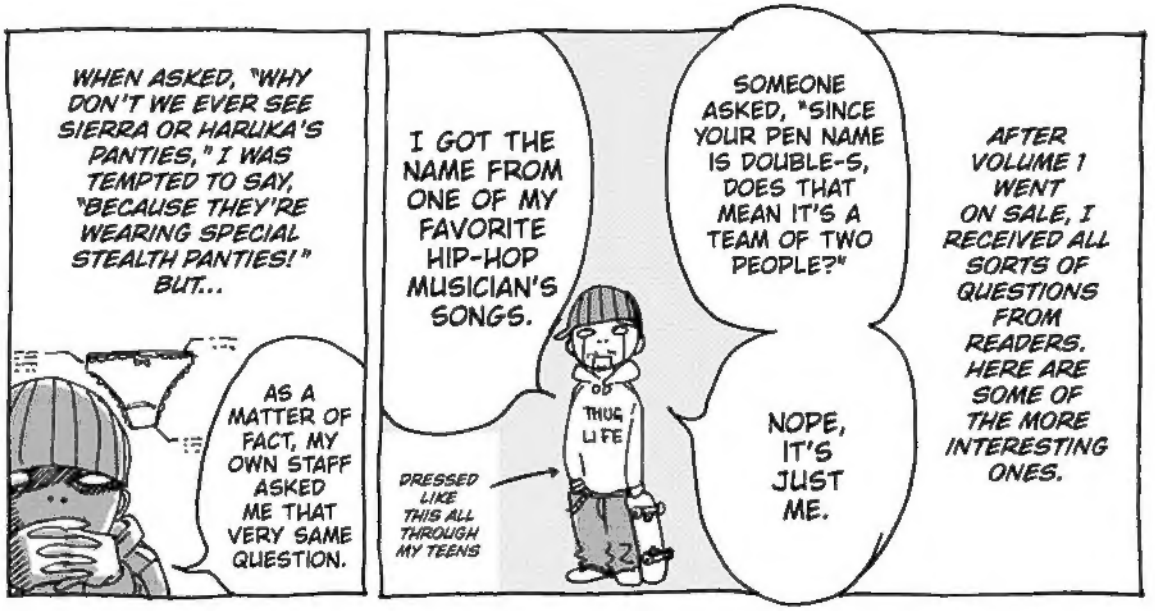

BONUS PAGE

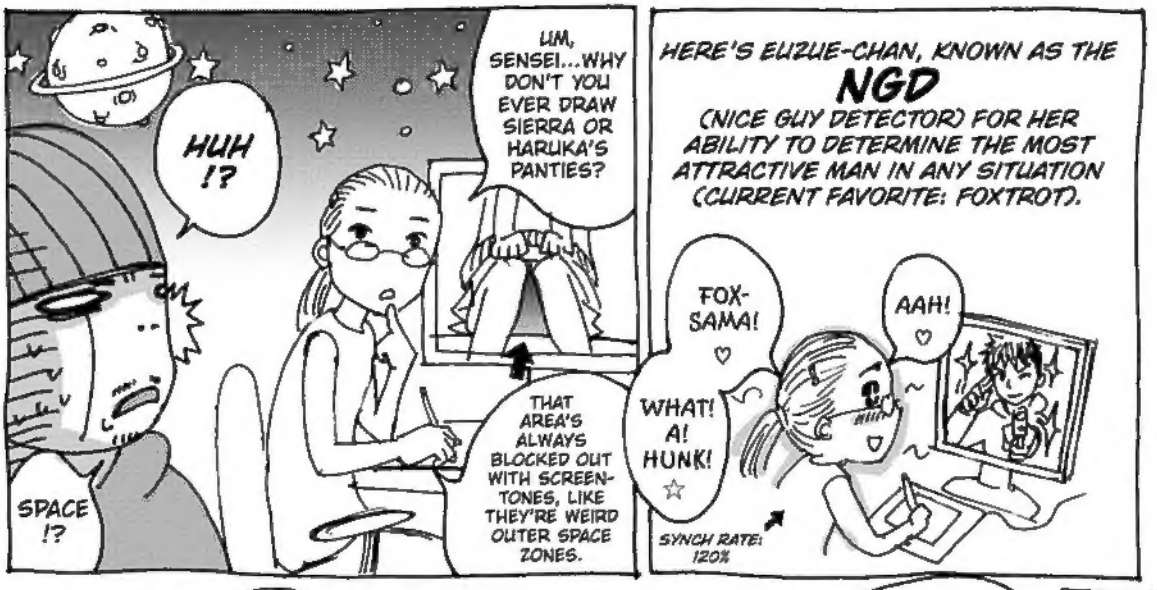
WOOO!
GOOD DAY, EVERYONE! I'M THE SUPER MEGA-HIT MANGA ARTIST (TO-BE), DOUBLE-S!
FIRST, AN ANNOUNCEMENT. WE'VE GOT TWO NEW STAFF MEMBERS!
AND THAT'S IT FOR THE NEW GUYS!
...
HUH? WAIT ...
NICE TO MEET YOU.
Yo~!
WaSSap! MYname...
AND ALSO ON BACK-GROUNDS AND SOUND EFFECTS, SURI-CHAN!! (24, ♀)
THERE'S OUR NEW BACKGROUND MASTER, VAAASQ-KUN! (23, ♂)

HE'S LYING...
WE'RE NOT ALMOST DONE...
IT'LL BE TOMORROW BEFORE THIS ONE IS FINISHED.
.....
WE'RE ALMOST DONE! I SWEAR, WE'RE WORKING DOUBLE-TIME!
IT'S ALREADY BEEN A YEAR SINCE THE SERIES STARTED, AND THE RELEASE OF THE SECOND VOLUME SHOULD BE A JOYOUS OCCASION...BUT OUR CELEBRATED ARTIST HASN'T LEARNED A THING IN AN ENTIRE YEAR AND IS STILL A MAJOR HEADACHE FOR EVERYONE HE WORKS WITH. I'VE NEVER MET A DEADLINE I COULDN'T BREAK!

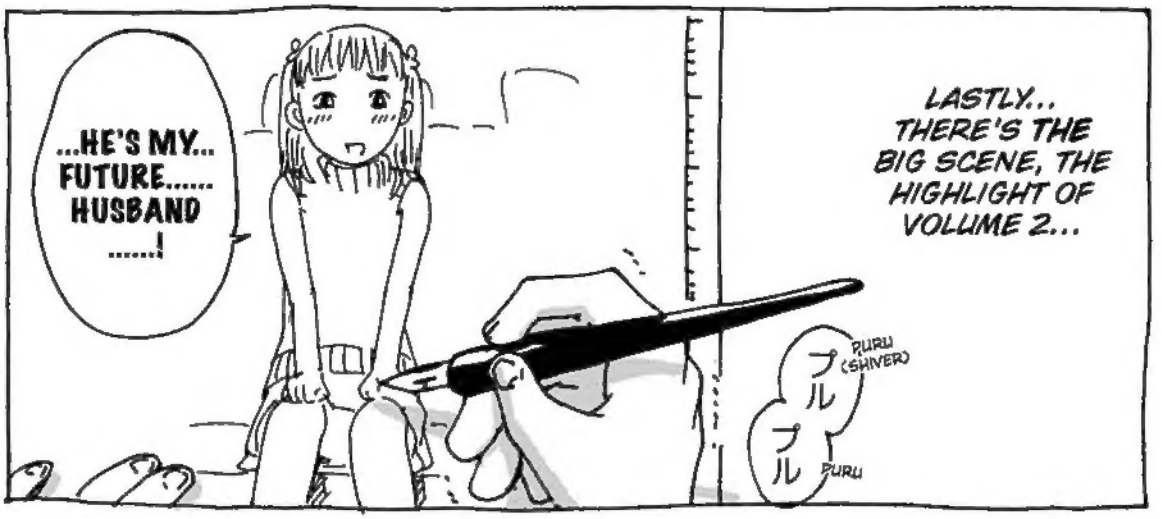
THEN DROP DEAD!
DRAW IT ALL OVER AGAIN!
A CHILD COULD DRAW BETTER THAN THIS!
THE SCENE ON DEAD-LINE DAY
I GOTTA FIND A NEW JOB...
.....
THIS ISN'T MANGA!
AS THE DAYS CRAMMED INTO THIS PRESSURE COOKER OF A STUDIO DRAG ON, I'VE DEVELOPED THE BAD HABIT OF RELEASING STRESS ON MY INNOCENT ASSISTANTS. (THEY SEEM TO BE USED TO IT, THOUGH.)

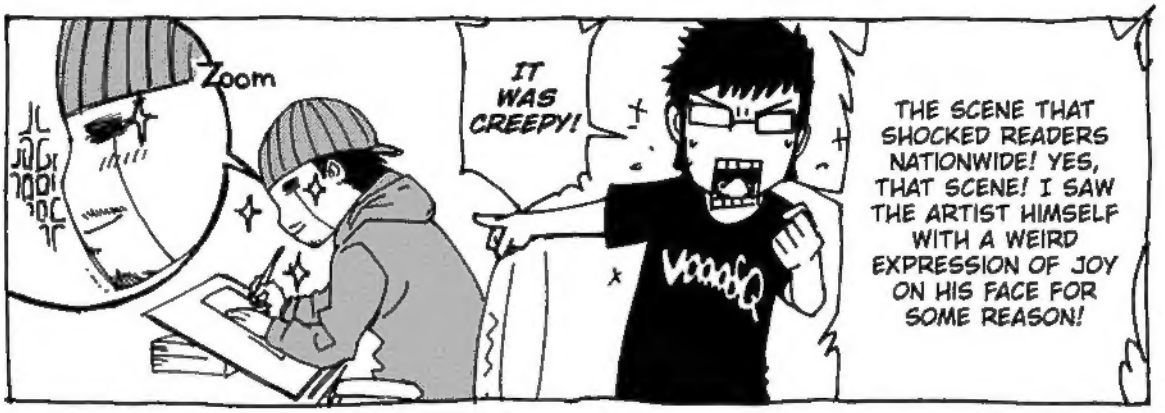
AND I MEAN, IT'S NOT LIKE YOU HAVE ANY OTHER JOBS YOU COULD DO.
HEY, THINK OF THIS LIKE TRAINING FOR BEING A REAL MANGA ARTIST.
...
OMIGOD... I HATE HIM SO MUCH...
SORRY, Y'KNOW?
OF COURSE, ONCE THE JOB IS OVER, I DELIVER A FULL AND PROPER APOLOGY TO ALL PARTIES.


WHEN ASKED, "WHY DON'T WE EVER SEE SIERRA OR HARUKA'S PANTIES," I WAS TEMPTED TO SAY, "BECAUSE THEY'RE WEARING SPECIAL STEALTH PANTIES!" BUT...
AS A MATTER OF FACT, MY OWN STAFF ASKED ME THAT VERY SAME QUESTION.
I GOT THE NAME FROM ONE OF MY FAVORITE HIP-HOP MUSICIAN'S SONGS.
DRESSED LIKE THIS ALL THROUGH MY TEENS
THUG LIFE
SOMEONE ASKED, "SINCE YOUR PEN NAME IS DOUBLE-S, DOES THAT MEAN IT'S A TEAM OF TWO PEOPLE?"
NOPE, IT'S JUST ME.
AFTER VOLUME 1 WENT ON SALE, I RECEIVED ALL SORTS OF QUESTIONS FROM READERS. HERE ARE SOME OF THE MORE INTERESTING ONES.


HUH !?
SPACE !?
UM, SENSEI...WHY DON'T YOU EVER DRAW SIERRA OR HARUKA'S PANTIES?
THAT AREA'S ALWAYS BLOCKED OUT WITH SCREEN-TONES, LIKE THEY'RE WEIRD OUTER SPACE ZONES.
HERE'S EUZUE-CHAN, KNOWN AS THE NGD (NICE GUY DETECTOR) FOR HER ABILITY TO DETERMINE THE MOST ATTRACTIVE MAN IN ANY SITUATION (CURRENT FAVORITE: FOXTROT).
FOX-SAMA! ♡
WHAT! A! HUNK! ☆
AAH! ♡
SYNCH RATE: 120%

YOU JUST DIDN'T FEEL LIKE DRAWING THEM!
WHAT'S THE POINT OF SWIMSUITS THAT AREN'T HIGH-LEG?
LIAR!
Only when the world is properly prepared can the "lost panties truth" be unveiled!
It's too early to be making any statements about Sierra's panties! I don't think mankind is ready for the secret truth hidden in that nether region!
BUT ENOUGH ABOUT THE PANTIES FOR NOW.




Zoom
IT WAS CREEPY!
THE SCENE THAT SHOCKED READERS NATIONWIDE! YES, THAT SCENE! I SAW THE ARTIST HIMSELF WITH A WEIRD EXPRESSION OF JOY ON HIS FACE FOR SOME REASON!

SO WHAT IS THE SHOCKING TRUTH BEHIND THIS LOOK ...!?
WAIT, ARE YOU, LIKE...
...PROJECTING YOURSELF ONTO MAMORU 'COS YOU'RE AROUND THE SAME AGE?
HUH?
N-NO!
WHY WOULD I—?
WHAT?

Double-S 2006.6

Art Staff
VaaasQ (23) ♂: Background Art
0-Second (21) ♂: Background Art
Euzue (23) ♀: Screentones
Suri (24) ♀: Background Art

Military Resources
Lee Hyun Seok (warmania)

SPECIAL THANKS
Shingo Takano

UNTIL DEATH DO US PART 1

Hiroshi Takashige
DOUBLE-S

Translation: Stephen Paul
Lettering: AndWorld Design

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